

Beyond Hawkins by Paperback-Avenger

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Summary: The Byers and El have moved out of Hawkins and onto another town in Indiana. One that Joyce believes is safer. Their neighbors have heard of the theories and claim to know sorts of horrors that went wrong in the small town. Back in Hawkins, a new danger is coming up and Mike feels that they can't face it- not without Eleven. Secrets come out and the long dead past rises again.

1. Chapter 1: Batonsville

Hey guys! This is an introduction of sorts to a fic. If you guys like it, I'll be happy to write more. Enjoy!

OCTOBER 3rd, 1985; BATONSVILLE, INDIANA

The bookstore had been rumbling with local college students that were desperate to get their textbooks in. Most had slacked off and chose to use books as a last minute thing. Others, like the young lady at the register, had been prepared way ahead of time. After all, she worked at *Batonsville Books* since her freshman year of high school. She had her book stored away since her acceptance to the local university. The owner insisted that he would not lose a profit off of the books and allowed her to store them away. In that way, she considered herself lucky.

"Here you go, Johnny," she said happily as she handed him the English book and his change, "is that gonna be all today?"

"Yeah," he nodded, "Thanks Deb. Am I gonna see you in class on Monday?"

"Of course!" she smiled, "Mrs. Dommer's class is always worth going to."

He agreed, bid her a good day and went off. She noticed how much the shop had died down in the middle of the day. The rush was over and she could go back to doing what she loved best. After stuffing the mess of dark brunette curls in that same old red banana clip, Deborah pulled out the notebook from under her desk. *What Lies in a Small Town* was written on the top. She opened it to the last ideas she had about Hawkins.

The Indiana city that was over two hours away had recently become a place of theories and suspicion. Deborah, her family and brother's friends heard about it all over the news. They were immediately curious and decided to spend the rest of their summer researching and trying to grab every little fact and rumor about the town. Every bit helped for a book that Miss Willis hoped to publish one day. And

then, it would all be worth it.

The bell rang moments later, and Deborah shoved the book away. A smile came to her red lips as Mr. Pickles came in. The old man fixed his mustache as he waltzed to the counter. He looked forlorn and content at the same time, approaching Miss Willis with a small card in his hand.

"Good afternoon, Mr Pickles!" she exclaimed, "Are you here for a new book, sir?"

"Yes, Deborah," he nodded, "*The Indian in the Cupboard*. I'm afraid it'll be the last book I buy at the shop."

"Oh?" the girl seemed disappointed with the answer as she walked over to the 'Fiction' section. "You've finally sold your house?"

"Yes I did!" he smiled, "Mary and I sold it just a week ago. We're leaving tonight, but we wanted to get our grandkids a book they can read. They just love stories!"

"Sorry to see you leaving," the girl pulled a brand new copy of the book from her shelf, "It's not gonna be the same without you."

Deborah was true to her words. Mr. Pickles had given a lot to the rather large town. He had been building homes and businesses since he was a young boy. He was the hardworking man that was rarely seen anymore in Batonsville. His positive attitude towards everything would permanently change their home- to see his smile when he walked through the door of any store was as calming as the ocean on the right day. But he was getting older, and his son had begged his father and mother to move to Pittsburgh to be with the family. Ultimately, it was the best decision. For both, the girl supposed.

"This town'll always have the memories, Deborah," the man pulled out his money, "But a new family's moving in. A nice little family- a mom and her kids. Great kids. I'm sure your brother and his friends will really enjoy their company."

"That's great!" She smiled, "You know, Rudy and his friends are always looking for new people to meet. And with them just down the

street, I'm sure Dad and I will be seeing them a lot."

"Oh, I'm sure of it," Mr. Pickles agreed as he took the book, "Their mother really was a kind lady. She looked like she'd been through a lot- but I suppose when you live in their town, there's a lot to deal with nowadays."

Deborah raised an eyebrow at the man's words. Her eyes averted to the notebook crammed under the desk, but it couldn't possibly be Hawkins. But- she had to find out. Her smile returned as she called for the old man once more.

"Mr. Pickles," she called, "Where's the family from?"

"That town- Hawkins. Just a little bit of a drive from here."

Deborah froze for a second, before her final goodbyes to the man. Miss Willis had been hoping for a miracle someday and this happened to be it. A whole family moving from Hawkins to Batonsville was a sure sign for her book. She had to tell her father. Before she could run to the back, a tall man, with long, greasy black hair and beady eyes came out. His unclean shave and intimidating appearance didn't make him look like a bookshop owner; but Mr Willis knew every detail about any book that came into the store. He, too, had a shocked expression, just like his daughter.

"Dad," she said, "Mr. Pickles-"

"I know," he stepped out, "Debbie, let's close the shop up and get home to your brother and his friends."

The girl and her father did all they could before locking up and leaving. Kevin hopped in the driver's side of his old Cadillac and sped onward. Meanwhile, Deborah flipped through her notebook. If residents of Hawkins were coming, they had to be prepared. Prepared not to ask questions, prepared to get on their bad side- prepared to do what they had to. And what they needed to do first was earn their trust.

Kevin drove into the front yard of his home on Peach Drive. His daughter leapt out of the car and ran to the front door. She fumbled

for her house key, with strong excitement and nervousness mixing together. When the black door flung open, Deborah ran inside as quickly as she could.

"Rudy!" she called for the young boy as she went up the rough carpeted stairs," Tanner? Joseph? Guys, I have big news! This is really important, where are you guys?"

"In the room," a boy's voice, like the calm winds of Indiana, came from the home intercom.

The teen smiled and looked to her father, who had entered in a fit of excitement. She nodded to the stairs and both ran up. They turned the hall and went into a room with a green door. Papers with theories and drawings scattered on corkboards sat up, with books on bright shelves lining the room. Newspapers and VHS tapes with labels were scarce, but existed nonetheless. Kevin and Deborah averted their attention to the floor. A red haired young man (Deb's brother Rudy), a girl with her braces on tight (known as Tanner) and a young Asian man (that had been Joseph) sat around with their notebooks in their laps. They looked up to the Willis family members, full of confusion but with bright smiles.

"Someone's home early," Rudy joked with a soft smile.

"What's going on?" Joseph asked as he could see the concern on both their faces.

"The new residents," Deb explained, as she sat next to the kids," the ones that are moving into the Pickles' old home? They're from Hawkins."

Tanner and Joseph showed bright faces. They were excited! They wanted to do nothing more than to meet people from the town they studied. They had so many questions to ask and things to find out. Rudy, however, lost his smile and his eyes lowered to his notebook. Before they could write down their questions, Kevin stopped them.

"We can't just jump down their throats with questions," he explained," They've got kids that are going to be scared as it is. We need to take the time to know them before we ask about Hawkins. I mean, you

wouldn't want to have them going on, begging for questions about Batonsville to you- would you?"

"Batonsville isn't like Hawkins," Tanner said jokingly.

"While that's true," Kevin said with a smile, "We need to make them feel welcome, got it?"

They nodded, thinking of ways to make the new people feel welcomed to their hometown. Deborah noticed the look in her little brother's eyes and decided that they should have a talk. She knew exactly what was going on in his mind. The two went off to the kitchen. She began to start dinner, as her brother sat the counter with a Coke in his left hand. He was still quiet- and the girl could figure out why.

"While the veggies are cooking," she said as she leaned on the counter, facing the boy, "I want to tell you that it's gonna be okay."

"I know," Rudy nodded, then looked up at his sister, "Deb, I want to know more about Hawkins because...we never got a chance at life there. Dad wanted to move there after everything was over, but when Mom basically signed her life away for that damn- thing, we never could make it there. Is that why we came here?"

Deb bit her tongue as she looked in her brother's eyes. She searched her brain for the right answer, but what could she say that wouldn't confuse him? Her dad could discuss it- but in the end, he would resort to breaking down and forgetting everything he knew. His daughter couldn't blame him. Gently, Deb smiled at her brother and ruffled his hair.

"We came here for safety and to forget," she explained, "but it was never a bad thing. True, we only spent a few months in Hawkins, but I never wanted to stay. It's probably for the best that we came to Batonsville anyways. We have great friends, a great community, great schools-"

"Great presence of Tommy Baker," Rudy hid his smirk at the thought of the annoying jock flirting with his sister.

"Yeah right," Deb rolled her eyes with a smile," Set up the table before I tell Tanner about your kissy face dream."

Rudy glared (but smiled) as he grabbed the plates and silverware. He looked at the table, then looked back to Deb, then the table. And with a quick open and close of his eyes, the room was in slow motion. His sister's cooking and the way her head bobbed were moving ever so slowly. But the boy was moving as he normally would. He smiled as he put the plates and silverware together in each little spot. Everything was perfect- no doubt. When all was done, time moved quickly again. He looked proudly at his work.

"You might want to wash your hands and wipe your nose before dinner," Deb said without looking.

Rudy obliged and went to the bathroom. He sat the little bit of blood trickling down his nose and quickly wiped it away. He then washed his hands, and looked to his right wrist. No matter what he used to clean his skin, it would never go away.

Forever, Rudy would have '010' on his skin.

It was all a symbol of the not forgotten past.

2. Chapter 2: New Home

Thank y'all for the love and support this fic is getting! I appreciate it so much. Enjoy Chapter 2! UPDATE: I decided to change the dates a little bit

OCTOBER 4th,1985

Joyce had the radio about halfway up as she drove down the backroads. She figured loud music is what her kids would want best as they sped towards their new home. So far, Ms Byers was already feeling confident about the move. She pictured a lot of 'new' in her head and that's all she could hope for. She had a lot of demons to leave behind and a lot of memories to put into the grave. And their new town would be the perfect place to go so. With a glance in front of her, Joyce smiled as she saw the sign.

"Here we are," she mentioned to the back seat and the passenger's side,"El, Will, Jon- this is Batonsville."

The three kids hadn't talked much the entire ride down. They kept their eyes outside They were all about new beginnings, of course, but they hated to leave their old life behind. They now had long distance relationships and a sense of feeling lost. They had to make the best of it, for they couldn't go home again. Joyce kept silent, but would do her best to cheer up her children, knowing the move was hard on them all.

Batonsville had been a smaller version of Hawkins. There were plenty of people and plenty of places to be. Houses stood in small communities and towered over those that lived in them. Eleven had her sights on a few girls giggling and running into the nearest shop. It made her miss Max. Jon smiled when he saw a news building, but on the inside, it just reminded him of Nancy. They turned down from the town square and onto a street full of houses and trees.

"It's beautiful here," Eleven spoke up from the back.

"Isn't it?" Joyce asked, happy that her daughter had spoken up," Wait until you see our house. Jon, what's the address written on the map?

"Let's see," the young man flipped through the pages," 531 Peach Drive."

"Are there any kids in this neighborhood?" El asked.

"A few," Joyce nodded," the agent says that Batonsville is a great area for families, which means the schools are going to be incredible."

El and Will nodded, but glanced at one another with doubt. They didn't have much hope for this place and hoped something could change their mind. They drove up the gravel driveway, as the car bumped its way up to the house. The white house looked brand new, as if it was untouched by the previous owners. The wood on the porch hadn't been splintery, and the red porch swing was moving softly with the breeze. Oak trees stood tall around the family and flowered sprouted up the walk. Mums were all around, splashes of orange and yellow coming to Joyce's eyes as she parked the car.

"Isn't it wonderful?" she asked the kids.

By the lack of any proper response, Joyce knew she had to give a speech. She took a minute to imagine what Jim would say. He would be firm, then soft, then would probably go in a fit of rage before he forced them all inside. Well she wouldn't do *that*. She couldn't help but giggle a little at the thought of Hopper's speech. If she said she was over him, Joyce would be lying. She kept thinking how she would never really get over Jim. Neither would El, she supposed.

"Kids," she took a deep breath and turned around," I know it's hard to just go up and leave Hawkins. We have a lot of history there. But I can assure you that we're gonna be okay. Batonsville is gonna be just like our old town. You'll meet new friends and still have contact with the old ones. I promise you, all of this is gonna be okay. We just need to...get used to it."

"Thanks, mom," Will said with a smile.

From there onward, the kids got out of the car and began to take their stuff out. When the four walked through the front door, there was a moment of silence. The house was huge, to say the least, with wide open spaces and enough room for new furniture. Joyce saw so

much to do with this two story home. Her home.

"Why don't you three go pick out your bedroom?" she decided.

"You sure you don't need help, Mom?" Jon asked.

"You can grab your stuff after you pick your room," Joyce watched El and Will quickly run up the stairs," But something tells me you won't get the one you want."

With a smirk, Jon ran upstairs after the kids. El had already found her room, with a huge closet for all her new clothes. She could store hundreds of outfits in there and never had to keep shuffling through. The perfect view of the street was displayed from her bedroom window, which gave in brilliant light. El sat on the gray carpet, taking in the softness one second at a time. She closed her eyes for a minute. Her backpack fell to the floor and she took it all in. This was her new life, this was her new home. Joyce was right- fresh beginnings were coming. She could hang up those posters of Ralph Macchio and Judd Nelson that Max gave to her. She could set up her stereo on a dresser and crank it loudly. El envisioned the beauty her room would be. Even if it wouldn't be the same as her old one.

"Nice room," Will walked in, and the girl opened her eyes," I took the one at the end of the hall. It's got enough space for collections and such."

"That's good," El nodded," I like the space in here. And the closet space."

Will remained quiet and looked down at his feet. He could confess his thoughts and feelings to El- she was one of his closest friends. He sat down next to her, facing her without much of a thought.

"Do you think that we'll make friends here?" he asked, somewhat nervous.

"Of course," El looked at her friend.

"I just- I'm not the most popular and we are the new kids. I feel like this is-"

"Will and El- can you hear me?"

The two felt their faces light up as they looked to the girl's bag. They could recognize Mike's voice anywhere, even through a radio. She pulled out the walkie- talkie with excitement. They crouched together just before they spoke.

"I don't know, can you hear us?"

Mike smirked as their voices came in. Cerebo had still been set up, sitting on the highest peak where they had left it. Dustin sat on the grass with his head back. The ball cap covered the sun enough that he didn't go blind, but the light was still bright. Max and Lucas shuffled together, wrapped in their winter coats as that fall was going cold. They let the cool Indiana air sweep by as they sat around the radio, more than happy to talk to their friends.

"Did you guys make it to your house?" Mike asked.

"Affirmative," Will replied, " It's gorgeous and, Mom was right- the house is bigger than our old one."

"But does the house have yours truly?" Dustin butted his way in.

"Come on, man!" Mike protested, " We agreed that *I* would be the first one to talk to them. Don't you remember?"

"Just throwing in some facts," Dustin pointed out, " It's not like any of your 'other' conversation would be private."

"Sure thing, Dustybun."

El suppressed her laughter when she spoke, but Max and Mike let out loud laughter. Dustin blushed but didn't say a word. They'd been using that nickname to tease him ever since the summer- he could never live it down.

"Who has the best room?" Lucas decided to ask.

"Mine," El mentioned.

"I believe she meant 'Will's room'," the other boy said with a smirk,

then stopped for a second," It's a lot different here. I miss-

"Kids?" Joyce called out," Come downstairs and meet our new neighbors!"

"Gotta go," Will and El spoke," We miss you guys a lot."

Quickly, the call shut off and the two went downstairs. In Hawkins, the four on the hill sat in silence. Mike missed El a lot. It was obvious to those that sat around him. The Wheeler boy felt empty with the absense of his girlfriend. It had only been a few hours since they were gone, but he had reminded himself of the impending move. Although he often showed strength, he couldn't be permanently strong. He and the others missed both more than they wanted to admit.

"Do you think they're gonna be okay?" Mike decided to ask.

"Of course," Max brought up," They have Jonathan and Ms Byers. Will and Eleven have always been strong. They've managed to fight unlikely creatures and keep the whole town protected. They've been through a lot- and they're capable of anything."

"That was when El had her powers."

"She doesn't need powers," Dustin brought up," Not now at least. If bad shit were to happen again, they'd be-

"Dustybun?" Suzie's voice came through," Are you ready for another chapter of *The Incredible Love*?"

The three others laughed quietly, as Dustin blushed. His girlfriend had been writing a book based on their love story. Of course, it was mostly fiction, with science fiction and history smashed into one book. One that the Henderson boy couldn't get enough of. For a while, only the two of them had known about it. He glared at his friends and turned back to Cerebro with a smile.

"Yes, Suziepool," he cooed," I can't wait to hear what you wrote today."

"We'll catch up with you at my place," Lucas mentioned.

The three headed down the hill as Dustin went on, listening to the beautiful story his girlfriend had written, taking in every word and smiling as she went on. If he said he loved another story (or girl) he would be a liar.

3. Chapter 3: Welcome From Willis

Thank y'all for the support! Enjoy chapter 3!

Joyce happily stood in front of the Willis family. So far, they were all welcoming. Kevin had introduced himself, his daughter and his son with positive grace and fulfilling kindness. Deborah had already given the Byers a batch of chocolate chip cookies; the smell filled the new house. For a moment, Joyce could forget her troubles and allowed herself to enjoy a cookie from the tray.

"These are incredible, dear," she complimented, hearing her children come down the stairs," And these are my kids! This is my oldest, Jonathan, my daughter, Jane and my youngest son, Will. Boys, Jane- this is the Willis family from down the street."

"It's nice to meet you, sir," El stuck out her hand, to which he accepted and shook.

"Same to you, Jane!" he then shook the hands of the boys," I'm Kevin, this is my daughter Deborah-" she insisted that they call her Deb," and my son, Rudy."

El and Rudy smiled to one another, but the girl was feeling an odd vibe. She glanced at Rudy, who held onto his wrist awkwardly. She sensed a vibe about him, but smiled politely and greeted him happily. Kevin glanced to the car and saw several boxes and suitcases from the trunk and haul. But amongst all they had, he saw an opportunity. He looked back at the Byers family and smiled.

"You know," he brought up," not to be sneaky, but we saw that you have a lot of stuff to move in. Maybe we can help you guys!"

"Oh, I couldn't ask you to do that."

"We insist!" Deb gave a soft smile.

With that, both families walked outside and back into the fresh air. Kevin and Joyce watched their children grab some boxes. They stacked together and walked inside, to the rooms upstairs. Mrs. Byers

could see that her children were bound to make friends instantly. Mr. Willis grabbed a box marked "Plates" and headed for the kitchen, with the new lady following behind.

"So what made you choose Batonsville?" he asked as they set the boxes down.

"It was one of the first places I could find a job," she laughed, opening one of the boxes, "We had to get away from our old town. It wasn't safe and my kids have been through a lot. We...we lost a lot, let's just say."

"I'm so sorry to hear that," he nodded sympathetically, "I know how it feels to lose. My wife died after she gave birth to Rudy."

"Im sorry," Joyce whispered.

"Nina would have wanted us to not dwell on the past," he admitted, "She loved us all. In fact, we moved here because of her. She used to live here as a kid, but we moved to another part of Indiana when we got married. When we came back to Batonsville, it felt like a weight lifted off of my shoulders."

"I take it that it's a good place?" she smiled.

Kevin couldn't have agreed more. He always thought their little piece of Indiana was safe, and that no one could take it away from them. He liked to think that Nina personally picked her hometown because she felt like Batonsville was a nest. One where her children could grow up and forget about any past mistakes. That's what Mr Willis liked and intended to keep it that way. From there on, he talked about the schools and how the area had been a place that Joyce's family could safely grow. Safe isn't a word she had thought about in a long time- not with the man she couldn't help but wonder about gone.

"You and your kids are gonna love it here," Kevin's voice was calm, "I promise."

"Batonsville's not a bad place," Rudy shrugged as he set Will's 'Figurine' box down on the floor, "It gets kind of boring because, well,

nothing ever happens."

Boring was probably the one thing El and Will needed. After all they had been through, the idea of finally relaxing felt all too good to be true. They wanted to take time to meet new friends and explore their new home. Like the Byers boy remembered doing with his best friends before life (quite literally) turned upside down.

"What do you and your friends do for fun?" El asked as she set a suitcase aside.

"There's a lot to do!" Rudy mentioned, "After school, my friends and I like to ride around on our bikes. We go anywhere that our bikes take us. Maybe you guys can come with us tomorrow and get a tour of the town."

"We'd like that," Will agreed, "Have you guys ever had anything...weird happen here?"

"Other than Mrs. Brommswell having seventeen cats, there isn't much that happens in this town."

El couldn't help but smile. Seventeen cats was the most normal thing she heard in a long time; the same went for Will. Perhaps Batonsville would be the fresh start everyone in the family needed. Even if it took some time and getting to know new friends. Rudy, however, watched El with thoughts that ran rapid in his mind. It could have been stupid boyish hormones, but something about her was different. And he couldn't point out what it was.

Jonathan had stopped unpacking when he found his camera and pictures of the two of them. All he could think of was Nancy and the gift she had given him. He hated to leave her behind in Hawkins. He wanted nothing more than to come back and be with her. Of course, he would see her again. In the summer, he would spend his time back home and would tell Nancy everything about Batonsville. Leaving her was hard and he hated to admit it. Deborah came in with a box and saw him looking down at pictures. She placed the box on the bed and glanced at the pictures, a smile on her face.

"Is that your girlfriend?" she asked, "Not to be nosy, but what's her

name?"

"Nancy," Jon mumbled as he opened the other box," she's my first girlfriend. This whole long distance thing is gonna be hard, if I'm honest, but at the same time, I knew it was best to be with my mom and...siblings."

"I understand," Deb nodded," I went to the local college for the same reason. Our family's close and we do what we can for each other. I'm sure everything between you and Nancy will be alright. I don't really know her- but the two of you seem to be happy, judging by your pics."

"Thanks," he sighed," I hate to admit it, but I miss Hawkins already."

Now was the chance to slowly slip in her thoughts. The girl formulated what to say, then gave a curious smile to the young man.

"Hawkins, huh?" she asked," I've actually thought about a summer trip there."

"Oh really?" he laughed," Interested in the theories?"

"Kind of," Deb nodded," They're better than Batonsville theories. The older residents here like to claim that we're a haunted town. They said that people went missing and that creatures used to wander around for the souls of children. Of course, it's just a bunch of nonsense, don't you think?"

"I hate to agree, but-"

Jonathan glanced at the camera for a second. Those were all just theories- but Will going missing was just a scheme. Eleven's captivity was a scheme too. Hawkins itself was a spider's web of odd happenings- but he couldn't trust anybody. After a second, he turned to Deb, who had been in the doorway about to leave. She hoped he would say something about Hawkins, anything that would get the family closer.

"Same thing about Hawkins," he lied," every rumor is just nonsense made by the media. Those incidents, a few months back, were just a coincidence, I guess."

"Every little town has their rumors, I guess," Deb nodded, but was internally cursing.

The walk home was quiet for the Willis family. They were thanked several times by Joyce for their help, but shrugged it off as 'being polite'. Rudy had been thinking all the way home. He still couldn't realize what was different with Jane or why she had been so quiet. He mistook it for nerves, but after the connection he was feeling, the Willis boy couldn't keep the feelings to himself.

"Something was different about that daughter," he looked to his dad and sister.

"What are you talking about?" Kevin questioned as they approached the front steps.

"I mean that I felt a connection to her. It wasn't a love one but it was something. Like we were attached at the mind. I can't really explain it."

Kevin bit his lip and nodded. His son feeling a connection to someone from Hawkins was understandable. He had seen it coming after he heard where the new family was from. It was all just a matter of time before it made sense to anyone.

"Let's think about this tomorrow," he said, "when you, Tanner and Joseph hang out with those two, see if you feel the connection. If what I'm thinking is right-

He paused, but his kids nodded. Tomorrow would be different, and (for all they knew) could lead to much worse.

4. Chapter 4:Монстры

Enjoy!

KAMCHATKA, RUSSIA; OCTOBER 4th

The only sound heard for the prisoners was thundering boots. The four men held onto the long syringes as they proceeded down the long hallway. They were uncomfortable about the procedure, but it was necessary. They were on a march to death and not a word was spoken. What could they say? Each scientist was never one for reassuring, and they signed up for this hellstorm. They knew what they were getting themselves into.

The group stopped at a cell that had strange noises brewing inside. The growling made each man shake and wait patiently for one another. The leader turned to his men as he heavily breathed.

"Vse, chto nam nuzhno sdelat', eto vzyat' obrazets krovi i vybrat'sya ottuda. Ponimayu? (All we have to do is take a blood sample and get out of there. Understand?)" he asked.

Each gave a solid nod, holding onto their syringes. The man opened the gate and lead everyone in. After a few seconds, the creature lurked out on all fours. It slithered over to the four, then stood on its hind legs. The creature looked down at all four, who pointed their needles towards it. The men were all in for it. They had one chance to take the monster's blood samples and leave without a scratch on them (if possible).

"Stoykiy...zatem udaril! (Steady then hit!)" the leader informed.

The men did so, but after the monster let out a roar, all Hell broke loose. It grabbed one of the men who poked a syringe into its neck. It screeched and threw one man against the wall. His back threw out immediately, and the other guy broke his neck on impact. The creature slashed the suits of the others who were desperately trying to contain it. But alas, nothing seemed to work.

All four men had been taken out, and that gave time for the creature

to run. Guards and others scrambled for safety, but it wasn't working. The creature opened its flower-like jaw and chomped at those who tried to stop it. The bullets flew by and grazed the skin of the monster. It let out a scream that pierced the ears of the guards. Then, came the high pitched siren that signaled the until. The creature tried to stop listening as it thrashed around, slashing the locks off of a nearby door. It moved quickly as the lights flickered. A sudden black out and dropped guards scared all those around.

Except for the man behind the door.

He stuck his head out, glancing all around. He looked to the end of the hall and saw that creature standing over something. A portal. The monster stepped in and he realized it was closing. He dove towards it, and looked all around. It was his only escape from Russia. His one chance. With a last look at the hell he lived in for the past few years, the man dove into the portal with his eyes closed. It was stupid and perhaps a death sentence, but Dr Brenner knew he had to get back to Hawkins. Somehow, at least. After a few seconds the lights came back on and the portal closed, leaving the Russians searching for their lost monster.

Steve looked through the books, unsure of what he was doing. He had been studying for two weeks now and he couldn't seem to get past the fall of the Roman Empire. Being able to go to the local college was a privilege. Studying to be a history teacher? Not so much. He sat behind the counter of the video store, without much focus on his work. How could he when his work was getting in the way?

"Someone's having a little trouble remaining focused," Robin mentioned as she stocked the shelves.

"I didn't think studying history would be this hard," he sighed, "It wasn't difficult when I was in highschool."

"That's because you didn't study in highschool," Robin laughed, "You know, studying can be fun, if you have the right study buddy."

"Study buddy," he let out a small laugh, "That could work- if we weren't in different majors. I mean, a pharmacist and a history

teacher don't have a lot in common. Then again, that'd be better."

"Because you wouldn't have to cheat off of me?" she asked as she walked back to the counter.

"Because I-"

The door opened and both turned to the person who entered. A young Asian woman came in, a bandana pulling back her long hair. She looked like any bored teenager, searching for a movie, a job, or both. Her style was almost out of fashion, but cool nonetheless. Steve and Robin looked to her and glanced to one another. A new resident-no doubt she lived in the Byers old house.

"Why don't you talk to the new girl," he whispered as he grabbed a box," while I stock the shelves? We all know what happened last time I made a movie recommendation."

"Remind me again how the history major has never heard of 'Ben-Hur'," she brought up.

"Back to work."

Robin rolled her eyes and smiled at the girl. She knew Steve was trying to help by being a 'wing-man' but he made it obvious in what he was doing. The smell of raspberries and mint wafted in the air as the girl looked at the young lady. They locked eyes for a second, before Robin spoke

"Welcome to Hawkins Video," Miss Buckley exclaimed with a proud smile," where we probably don't have the movie you're looking for. What brings you in today?"

"Are you guys hiring?" the new girl asked with a small giggle.

"Not that I know of," Robin said, then quickly added," but if you leave your name and house number, perhaps I can contact you? Maybe see if my boss knows anything?"

The new girl gave a sly smile. Steve watched the two for a second then quickly went back to stocking tapes. He admitted to himself that he was only trying to get Robin on the dating scene. Being a bachelor

and bachelorette in Hawkins was a drag, but at least the friends had each other. They always looked int after one another- ever since the hell they went through last summer. The girl introduced herself as 'Mandy Stanford', after she gave her number.

"I just moved in to the house outside of town," she explained.

"Well, Mandy Stanford from the house outside of town," Robin smirked, "My boss is gonna wanna know your three favorite movies so..."

"Some Like it Hot, Hidden Fortress and The Graduate," Mandy said with a smirk.

"Good films," Miss Buckley nodded, "You might be replacing Rapunzel over there."

Steve glared, but Mandy let out a laugh. Robin introduced herself, then her close friend. The Harrington boy waved before a few cases came tumbling down on him. He mumbled a few curses as he started to stack them away. As he worked and they talked, Steve noticed the lights above. They were flickering on and off, and a cold energy slowly swept by. He shivered slightly in the room. The energy took him by a surprise, and memories of the past few years came through. He didn't know why but it suddenly stopped as his thoughts vanished, and Mandy was waving to Robin as she left.

"Well now we know who moved into the Byers house," she laughed.

"Do you think she'll be a new part of the 'family'?" Steve asked, ignoring what he had just been through.

"Who knows?" she shrugged, "If she can deal with little kids, she can deal with us. We'll just have to see."

5. Chapter 5: Meet the Stanfords

Enjoy!

Erica watched the boys argue between each other. Ever since the summer, Lucas's little sister had been hanging out with his friends. But everyday, the boys were getting more and more on her nerves. She was thankful to have Max and El on her side- but now it was just Miss Hargrove. They sat in the Wheeler den, arguing about the new movies coming in 1986. Which lead to an argument between two friends.

"Tom Cruise does *not* have a likeable face," Lucas scolded, Dustin looking offended.

"Suzie *loves* Tom Cruise," he argued," and if she thinks he's the greatest thing since D&D, so do I!"

"That's not a valid reason to like him. Plus, he plays the same role- the 'handsome' hero who is a bit of a dickweed, who always gets the girl. But you know what? No matter how many movies he's in, no one in their right mind would like that self serving asshole."

"How dare you..."

"Ladies, please!" Erica threw her hands up," Whether you like Tom Cruise or not, he won't be taking either of you to the senior prom. So can we please get back to whatever we were going to do instead of bitching?"

Max high-fived her friend, with a nod of approval. The boys agreed to disagree, then sat on the couch together. Every few seconds, Mike glanced at the radio next to him. All he kept thinking about was how his girlfriend was doing. It wasn't the same without their other friends. They had only been gone a day or so, but they left so abruptly. There was more wondering than ever. Dustin noticed, as did Max, and the two scooted their way towards him.

"We've lost a lot these past few months," the red haired girl looked down at her feet," But we're all gonna be okay."

"I miss them," he admitted, "I mean, we all do, but I can't help but think that-"

"Mike!" Mrs Wheeler called from the top of the steps, "Come up here!"

Max paused the movie and nodded to Mike. He rolled his eyes and went upstairs. Karen was standing at the top, a smile on her face. The boy was arguing, questioning if everything was okay and how he and his friends got a free movie from Steve to watch. Mrs. Wheeler raised an eyebrow, hoping that Steve hadn't given them a dirty movie. Nonetheless, she dragged him over to the living room. Two adults sat on the couch, smiles on their faces. Mike was immediately reminded of the Griswold family when he saw the two. They looked like an American family that tried too hard and went through every mishap possible (judging by their tired looks and unsteady hands). That's how they probably ended up in Hawkins in the first place.

"Mike," Mrs Wheeler pointed out, "this is Mr. and Mrs. Stanford- they moved into the Byers old home. Roger, Jill, this is my son, Mike."

"Hello," he nodded, and shook Mr Stanford's clammy hand, "Welcome to Hawkins."

"Oh, thank you," Roger smiled and accepted the handshake, "We're happy to be here!"

"Roger and Jill have two kids your age," she nodded to the children that sat beside their parents, "Mike, why don't you take Lily and Dean to meet your new friends."

Mike nodded, then looked to the kids on the couch. The girl stood tall, with a smile on her face. The freckles across her nose and cheeks popped on her skin. Her green eyes were bright, but her brother's brown eyes looked...annoyed, to say the least. The short boy looked like he didn't want to be in Hawkins. The Wheeler boy couldn't blame him. As Mr Stanford apologized for the absence of their (apparently adopted) daughter, the two went towards the basement.

"So when did you guys get to Hawkins?" he asked as to lighten the mood.

"Not too long ago," the girl (Lily answered, her voice bubbly but deep)," Our mom was the first one to get us out of the house and through the neighborhood. Sorry if we're crashing anything, by the way."

"Oh, you're not," Mike reassured.

"Mandy's the lucky one," Dean piped up as they made their way to the steps," As soon as we got here, she went 'job hunting'. We know she's checking out the people in town, trying to get away from this insane family."

Lily sighed and looked down the steps. The crew made their way down, where the boys were having another argument about actors. Much to the annoyance of Erica and Max- and Mike, but he knew how to hide it well.

"That Keanu Reeves guy hasn't been in a single movie," Dustin brought up," How do you expect him to be 'The Actor of the Future'?"

"Give it time, young Jedi," Lucas joked," You get way too into this."

"I've heard of that guy," Lily mentioned," he's supposed to be in some movie with Rob Lowe- I think it's next year, but I could be wrong."

Lucas thanked the new girl, and smirked at Dustin. The curly haired boy rolled his eyes and threw his hands up. He looked to Erica for advice, but all she did was shrug and go back to the magazine Robin had snatched her. Mike then introduced the siblings, and in return, the group introduced themselves with pride. Lily was impressed but Dean was far beyond excited. It annoyed Erica to no end, but kept quiet, as it kind of reminded her of her old self- long before the days of new. When he mentioned the old house, the room grew quiet. Dean, being as oblivious as ever, questioned their actions out loud, earning a smack from his sister.

"What was that for?" he glared.

"I assume the house belonged to one of your friends," Lily mentioned.

"Yeah," Max nodded," they were really close with us. It's a shame that they both had to go..."

Lily was quiet for a minute, before she let out an apology. Dean didn't say anything, but he was too busy wanting to go home to care. The apology was short, as she didn't know what to say, but the silence didn't last for long.

"Don't be," Dustin mentioned, "the two of you are welcomed into our circle. Now, where were you guys from?"

"Pennsylvania," Dean grumbled, "Our dad had to move here for a paper job. If you ask me, we should've stayed where our friends are."

Lily rolled her eyes. Why couldn't Dean have been the adopted one? Then they could take him back and trade him in for an adventurous brother. She then explained that her father was actually the new owner of the Hawkins Post. After she'd done so, the group heard Mrs. Stanford calling for her children.

"Before you go," Max brought up, "maybe the two of you wanna come over tomorrow? We can show you what there is to do in Hawkins."

"That'd be great," they both said as they made their way to the steps (though Dean had severe sarcasm in his voice), "we'll bike here in the morning. Nice to meet you guys!"

The crew parted away. While the old crew put in their thoughts about the twins, Lily was in heaven. She knew she was close to making new friends already. They were all so welcoming and she felt much happier in Hawkins than in PA. Especially with all of the theories that lay in the town. Dean, on the other hand, was downright miserable.

"Oh, come on, Dean," Lily insisted, "Hawkins is pretty good so far. We've already met new people and we're gonna have a beautiful house. And we get to solve the theories that are in here."

"If you ask me," he grumbled, "It's all fake. These theories you talk about are just another lie for the media. Do you really think something strange could be up in this place?"

"Of course I do," Lily insisted, "and I'll convince you that we're caught up in a town of mystery. You'll see."

6. Chapter 6: Discovering More Than Home

Thank you all for the support I've been getting for this story. I love it! Enjoy Chapter 6

"What do you guys think of this place?" El asked that night as the Byers kids were getting ready for bed.

"I'm starting to like it here," Will mentioned as he stood in front of the bathroom sink, "I mean, we've only been here for less than a day, but everything seems so..."

"Non threatening?" Jonathan joked, although he felt it was a serious answer.

"That's the word," the boy agreed as the group walked towards their bedrooms, "I know it's not gonna be easy because...well, our friends aren't here. But if we go out with those new guys tomorrow, maybe we'll have a chance to meet new people."

Eleven couldn't help but cringe at the thought. When she was let out into the real world, she had a hard time making friends. Meeting new people would be hard for her, but at least she had Will on her side. The three bid each other goodnight and went off into their rooms. El and Will felt off in their new beds in the new atmosphere. They tossed and turned for about an hour, taking in their new life that was slowly coming together. But they could finally close their eyes and forget about the terror they left behind...

Will's eyes opened as he stood tall. The twisting trees and foggy air sent chills down his spine. He was on high alert as he glanced at the world before him. This all looked familiar. As he hoped for this all to be a dream, Will heard something rustling beside him. He looked to his left and saw Eleven in the same panicked state. She glanced to her friend, wondering where they were and if this was all a dream.

"Where are we?" she asked.

"I don't know," he admitted, "Wherever we are, this has to be a dream. This can't be-"

"Your fort."

"My fort?"

"Look," she said as she pointed in the distance.

Will tensed up when he saw Castle Byers. The one he left destroyed in the Hawkins forest; but it was now rebuilt. There was a noise coming from inside, and they weren't sure what it was. The girl wished she had her powers as they walked towards it. Will glanced to the girl, who kept her eyes on the fort. The darkness was taking over the scene, the fog creeping up behind their shoulders and ankles.

Eleven felt her mind twist as she made her way to Castle Byers. Whatever was inside wouldn't stop moving. The two stopped in front of the entry. Without much more hesitation, El pulled the curtain back. A Demogorgon with an open mouth hissed at the two kids, who reeled back in the dead of night.

El felt the sweat pour down her neck and forehead. She glanced towards the window and felt a rush of anxiety through her chest. The clock on the wall read 1:25 AM. The dream couldn't be real. The Demogorgon died years ago, when she was so much younger. When she had her powers. The window couldn't be trusted. That creature, no matter how it had vanished, could be anywhere. With paranoia, El made her way to the window and glanced outside. Only dying lights and beautiful trees weaved through the night. She took a deep breath and let relief wash over her, just as her door opened.

"You had the dream?" he asked.

"We were connected," she whispered, then looked to her bed. Maybe this meant she had her powers back. She tried to lift the bear that sat on her bed. She focused, focused, focused..but it only sat there. In defeat, she turned to Will, who was just as concerned as she was, "What do you think this means?"

"I don't know," the boy sighed as he leaned in the doorway, "Do you think that the Demogorgon is back?"

"It can't be," El refused to believe so, "I..I kiled it. Remember?"

"That doesn't mean that one can't be alive," Will glanced to the floor," Look, it was probably just a coincidence. We just need to forget about this and go to bed."

El wanted to protest and tell Joyce what they saw. She knew the connections between their dreams was more than a coincidence. But Will wanted a normal life. He wanted to forget the hardships in Hawkins and live a new life in Batonsville. So, reluctantly, she nodded and bid him goodnight, her mind full of thoughts but her eyelids heavy. She fell asleep, with no more dreams about the Demogorgon.

It seemed that the whole Byers had been out for the day. Joyce was buying clothes for her new job as a school receptionist. Jonathan was off in the woods, taking pictures of their new home. He had the idea of sending them to Nancy. Hopefully, she'd love them. As for Will and El- they were riding around town with Rudy and his friends. They biked through the town, Rudy pointing to shops and recalling some of his best moments there.

"We have two movie theaters," he brought up," Batonsville Theater and Cinemark. One's more for plays but they're always trying to lure more people in. Personally, we like to go to Cinemark. Bigger theaters and better prices."

"Was Cinemark first?" El asked as they passed by.

"No,no," Tanner shook her head," Batonsville was. To be honest, we were glad that the other theater opened up. At least we don't get stares from people who are going to see Shakespearian plays."

Will and El were in love with their new town. It was a sweeter version of Hawkins (in their minds) and a sense of peace was washing over them. By the time lunch came around, the kids have gone to *Marchelli's Pizza*. To the Batonsville crew, it was the perfect restaurant. They got along well with the owners and always spent their summers there. As they ate their pizza, which El enjoyed most, the two talked about their life in Hawkins; and, of course, Rudy and his friends listened closely.

"-All those theories you hear aren't true," El lied," it was just a normal

town. Kind of boring and a bit unsafe at times, but we still enjoyed it."

"We left behind a lot," Will sighed, "including friends."

"Then we welcome you to our group," Joseph brought up with a smile, raising his soda, "To Jane and Will- the newest Batonsville Biters."

The glasses tapped together and each person took a drink (though El was hesitant, as she hadn't done that before). After Will took a drink, he glanced at Rudy with a smile on his confused face.

"Batonsville Biters?" he asked.

"A long story," Rudy laughed, "In second grade, Tanner and I had just..."

Rudy caught sight of El's jelly bracelets and didn't think much of it. Just a jumble of bright colors and squiggly lines. When he looked again, however, he noticed something odd. Behind a bright orange band, the Willis boy saw a gray smudge. His vision focused for a second, and there he saw the number '11'. His storytelling was coming to an end as his mind froze up. Everyone noticed and became concerned with his silence. Eleven took action and leaned in close.

"Rudy?" she asked.

"Huh?" he snapped out of his daze, "Sorry guys. Just a lot of thoughts going through my head. Listen, let's go to the bookstore next. I'm sure my dad will be happy to see us."

The group agreed, and Rudy laid some money on the table for his share. He went off and onto his bike, riding down the block. He had to tell his dad and sister his discovery.

7. Chapter 7: The New Post

Enjoy!

The Hawkins Post hadn't been the same. In fact, in the eyes of Nancy, things were better off. The new reporters were more than welcoming when she came in. Although she was belittled by a few, most made her new part time job a blessing. The summer had changed everything, including her values. Nancy was determined for her voice to be heard; at school, at the 'old stomping grounds' and just out in the world. Her mind was set on her future- the one thing she could rely on.

On the new October morning, all who worked in the office were running around anxiously. Nancy had stepped outside from the breakroom after filling up the coffee pot. They were headed to the conference room with their minds focused on one thing. Nancy stopped Ms Dallas to see what the big rush was about.

"Didn't you hear?" she questioned as the two rushed towards the room," We got our official new owner. Mr. Stanford came all the way from Pennsylvania to be here."

Nancy had heard about this man. He'd done several stories that were well known in the journalism community. He was stylish in his words and brought a different perspective onto a story. Mike described him as 'Chevy Chase' and realized he was right, when she saw him. Nancy knew her new goal- get on the good side of Mr. Stanford.

"I came to Hawkins to write," he simply said to his new coworkers," every town has a great story. Those theories made wonderful parts for papers and such- but I want to add on. My old home in Dupont, PA had so much to offer. I'm hoping to offer all of you to help me in creating new articles and giving the world what they want. I look forward to working with all of you."

Now was her chance. Nancy stepped forward as the people left the room. Roger caught sight of the young lady and smiled. Judging by her looks, she was a fan. For that, he was grateful. She introduced herself and shook his hand, fear seeming to hide every other emotion.

"I'm a huge fan of yours," she said softly, "your article about Centralia was phenomenal."

"I'm glad to hear you enjoyed it," he smiled, "so, what can I do for you?"

"Sir," Nancy continued, "I've had this dream to get my voice heard in the world. When I realized that being a journalist was my passion, I started to search for the right story. Hearing that you were gonna be the owner of The Hawkins Post was...amazing. Would you, maybe, give me advice on how to be a better writer? Maybe get a good story out there?"

Mr Stanford saw potential in this young lady. She had a look crossed with determination and curiosity- perfect for this industry. During his years in PA, he met with several young writers that wanted to be out there. He smiled as he made up his mind.

"I'll give you more than that," he said, "Nancy Wheeler, how would you like to be under my wing for a while?"

"Really?" She asked excitedly, "Sir, that's incredible. I can't thank you enough."

"Oh, you don't have to," he insisted, "I'll just be happy to have a new assistant. In fact, maybe you have some good ideas for our first story."

Nancy flipped through her notepad for a second: She was still flustered about working alongside a well written journalist. He, however, remained patient. He knew the stress of writing and finding ideas. When Nancy showed him the idea, the man nodded with approval. Miss Wheeler knew her job was going to get a lot done.

Lily was already starting to love Hawkins. Mike and the others sailed in their bikes, riding across the plains. Each building was pointed out and each story was given (almost truthfully). They knew some of the tales had to be kept under wraps, but Miss Stanford loved it all. Dean, however, had no bit of fascination whatsoever. All he wanted to do was go home and read another book. So much for a day out. They approached the video store and parked their bikes on the side.

"Why don't we meet Steve and Robin?" Dustin asked.

"I'm actually here to return a video," Mike held up the tape.

"Oh right," the curly haired boy said then turned to Dean and Lily, "they're older, but they're a big part of our group. Wait until you meet them."

"Great," Dean sighed, and earned a glare from his sister.

When they entered, Steve's boss was arguing about some kind of R rated film. They usually found that Steve was making mistakes and if not for Robin's persuasive words, the boy would've been out on his first day. Harrington seemed confused by the anger of his superior. He didn't know why he was being told off, while Miss Buckley was trying not to laugh her ass off in the aisles.

"What's the big deal?" Steve asked his annoyed boss, "I just recommended a movie to a ten year old."

"You recommended Taxi Driver to a group of young boys," he scolded, "Have you never seen what kind of horror goes on in that film?"

"I thought it was just a cool movie about a taxi driver!" Harrington protested, "And it has Robert DeNiro- everybody loves that guy! He's, like, super chill."

"Just let Robin handle any suggestions, okay?"

The boss had thrown his hands up in the air and walked off. He saw the kids and rolled his eyes, knowing they were only here for their friends. When Steve and Robin laid their eyes on the kids, they smiled.

"Kids!" Steve exclaimed, "How are my favorites?"

"Good, Mama Harrington," Lucas joked.

Steve hadn't liked that nickname and showed his disgust for it. Robin, however, found it amusing. She often peppered it into their conversations with the kids. Although 'Mama Harrington' protested it,

they kept fighting back. Mike placed the movie on the counter. While he gave a quick review (to Steve's confusion, as he didn't know much about the film) Miss Buckley saw the two new children from the crowd.

"Who are these guys?" Robin asked.

"Lily and Dean Stanford," Lily mentioned with a smile, "My sister Mandy actually came in. She said she came to apply for a job. Met some dork and a pretty cool girl."

"Well," the older girl hid her smile, knowing Mandy called Steve 'some dork'," Tell your sister that she can start on Monday. Our boss approved of her list of movies- said they're gonna be classics, or whatever."

"So now you've got two new kids, Mama!" Dustin laughed.

"If you guys know what's good for you," Steve turned to the Stanford kids," You won't call me that. Guess replacing two kids with two more is good enough for me. So, do you kids like Hawkins."

While Lily gave a positive response, Dean shrugged. He hadn't seen much he liked about the town and it was obvious. Steve glanced to the kids, asking quietly if they revealed the town's secrets to the two. While the group argued about what was right and wrong, Erica and Robin glanced to one another. After sharing a smirk, they looked to the Stanford kids.

"Did you know those rumors *are* true?"

"Erica!" Dustin protested.

Lily listened intensely as Erica and Robin described the trials they'd been through. They mentioned Eleven and her wicked powers. They told stories of the demons they faced and the bad people they met. Miss Stanford took in each bit of info. From Will's disappearance to his move, the girl told the stories as quick as possible. Meanwhile, the others were apologizing and trying to deny what went down.

"It all happened?" Lily asked once the girls were finished, receiving nods and shakes of heads," Well...that's the coolest thing I've ever

heard?"

"Really?" they all asked.

"It's bullshit," Dean put his opinions into the ring, "Demogorgons? Mind Flayer? Russians? It sounds like an overpriced movie that ripped off every movie I know."

"But it's real," Max explained, "All of it. Okay, we know it's a little hard to believe, but..."

"A little?" Dean laughed, "Okay, okay, if you can prove that any of this is real, I'll stay."

If they could, they would've proven it in a second. Lily decided that proof would help her brother's thoughts. When the group stood in awkward silence for a second, Dean turned and left the store. Lily, however, stayed. She had questions and knew where to start.

"What does the Demogorgon look like?"

"You mean that you still believe us?" Lucas asked.

"Of course," she nodded, "I've always liked to research that kind of stuff. Hawkins has a lot of theories and, if residents are saying it's all real, who am I to doubt?"

She would get along well with the group. Mike answered her question quickly. As he described this big, 'flowery' monster, Lily pondered for a minute. She swore to herself that she had seen something like that. One that stood in her backyard, wailing for something she couldn't comprehend. But it could've all been in her dreams as far as she knew.

8. Chapter 8: Matching the Numbers

I hope you guys like this! There's a little bit of cursing, but enjoy!

Kevin and Deb shuffled through the bookstore. Miss Willis always worked hard when it came to organizing the shelves. She often rearranged the shelves and loved to label the categories. She loved the little power kick from it. As dorky as it was, she was true to her word when it came to what she loved. It honestly made Mr. Willis proud to see that his daughter would be herself- no matter who saw it unfit.

"Is that organized by genre and author?" Kevin asked as he watched the girl put the books away.

"Sure is!" she exclaimed, "I had to make more room for those science fiction novels you ordered. They were supposed to be in next week, but an early delivery is better than no delivery!"

As she spoke, Rudy came running in. Kevin saw the look in his son's eyes and saw panic. The young Willis boy took a minute to breathe. He'd tossed his bike to the side of the shop and he'd gone so fast, he swore he was using his powers.

"What happened?" Kevin asked softly.

"That-that new girl," Rudy wheezed, "we were at the pizza shop and I looked at her wrist. I- I don't know what made me look or why I was even focused on it. But when I looked, I saw that she had a tattoo. Just like me."

Kevin and Deb glanced to one another. Although he didn't show it, the father was becoming panicked. Hawkins was tracing itself back into his life. Deb, however, gave much more excitement into the situation.

"This is great," she thought aloud, "having her in our shop is gonna be even more incredible. Oh, I hope she loves to read. Then she'll spend more time in here!"

"Let's not get ahead of ourselves," Kevin chuckled nervously, "We can hope, but don't let the hopes get ahead. For all Rudy saw, maybe it was just a mark of some kind. Like that time that ink exploded on my..."

The family stopped talking when the crew entered the shop. El and Will had been head over heels in love with the place. True, there had been bookstores in Hawkins. But there was never one so quiet and peaceful. The library had been a nice place, but moments of silence were hard to find. El approached one of the shelves and studied the books. The wooden shelves reminded her of Hopper's cabin and how much time she spent in there. The beacon of safety was gone, but perhaps she'd found a new one.

"Hello Mr. Willis" Tanner said to the man, "Have you meant Jane and Will Byers?"

"I met them yesterday," he nodded, "Good to see you kids in my store."

"It's beautiful, sir," Eleven admitted.

Kevin looked down at the girl. An overwhelming anxiety came upon the man. He took in her features, feeling as though her face was familiar. But when he looked into her eyes, he found himself back in time...

He knew he couldn't be there. He was surprised that he'd even gone into the backdoor. Kevin paced himself as he slinked through the halls. He was sure that Rudy had been in one of the rooms. Getting his son back was the promise Kevin had given his wife. Before her last breath on that hospital bed, she'd known this experiment was wrong. That everything they'd been teaching him for the past two years was...devilish, to put it in perspective.

Kevin found himself in a room marked with a big red 'X' in the window. He glanced in, and saw something speeding around. He peered closer and bit his lip when he realized that the speed was from his little son. Rudy's nose was bleeding, and he looked like he was crying. On his wrist, the number '010' was tattooed. He was not safe and Kevin would not stand by and let this happen. Not when he was holding the silver pistol from his side.

The man burst through the door. He saw two men standing on the side, and before they could speak, he shot at them. They fell back and Kevin wasted no time in taking Rudy. The child thrashed about, scared from all the noise being made. Kevin whispered into his son's ear in an effort to calm him down. He ran through the halls with fear pulsating through his veins. He tried to find the exit, hearing Brenner calmly yelling his name.

"You don't want to go do anything that'll get you hurt, Kevin," he called.

"Fuck you, Martin," Kevin hissed as he ran, "You tricked my wife and took our son! You deserve to go to Hell."

"Feisty, are we, Mr. Willis?" Brenner laughed.

Kevin turned the corner and saw the doors he came through. He stormed over, and noticed an open door, which had a rainbow painted on it. He looked through and found a playroom. Mind bending toys and colorful pictures stood around. By a doll was a little girl. Her big eyes caught sight of the man. He felt immense guilt, knowing other children had to be in the facility. But he couldn't take them when he had to go.

He ran out of the place, putting his son in the back of his car and taking off. He had to forget that girl..he had to forget what happened to Rudy.

"Oh!" Kevin stepped out of the daydream, "Thank you, Jane. So, how is that tour going?"

"Great!" Will came through, "This has a lot of similarities and differences to Hawkins- but it's good to have a new home."

"Ah, I miss Hawkins," Mr Willis sighed, "we used to live there and I loved it more than you could imagine. Well, you kids should probably go off before it gets dark. There's a lot more to go see. You kids should go to the arcade!"

Rudy thanked his dad for the suggestion and they went off. Will looked back at the man, then turned away, feeling something...off, about Mr Willis. A sadness came back to Kevin as he sat down. His thoughts quickly flew in and out of his mind. Nina. The facility. That little girl...tears came to his eyes as he hid his face. His daughter quickly came and knelt down before him, laying his hand on hers.

"What's wrong, Dad?" she asked softly.

"Deb," he whispered, "Do you remember anything in Hawkins?", when she shook her head, he went on, "Thank God. Deb, Hawkins was a bad place for our family. A bad place for your mother. She was ill when she was pregnant with your brother. All those times she spent in the hospital were...were real. But when she was going to a hospital in San Dimas..."

His daughter knew Rudy was part of an experiment. She knew he had powers- but she never understood the origin. As her father confessed everything, confessing that their mother signed Rudy for such a thing, confessing that he'd seen the girl before, he broke down. As her father shook, Deb softly calmed him down, in an effort to keep him quiet. When he looked up, tear stained eyes on his daughter's face, he saw a worried look.

"That girl coming here is a sign," she said, "I don't know if it's for good or for bad, but I believe it's mom. And she's trying to tell us something. I just wish I knew what it was."

For a moment, they sat together in silence. When Kevin stood up, he hugged his daughter, forgetting about their fears for just a second

9. Ch:9 Looking Through the Upside Down

Two chapter in one day! Only eight chapters left- enjoy!

Martin wandered along the barely lit path. He'd been walking for what seemed like days in The Upside Down. A while ago, he lost sight of the Demogorgon and was making up for lost time by dragging himself all over the creation. Each grueling second on foot caused pain everywhere else. Brenner saw the darkness and horror that laid in the world below. He felt cold in this place and wanted nothing more than to be free. He could've been free, but each portal the Demogorgon went to was the wrong one.

Brenner only wanted to be in Hawkins. He needed to see how the world changed without him. How each little difference was taking its toll on the world. He needed to make things right with himself. His past would never change, and he didn't like to think about Eleven. He made mistakes he would not admit. The others had been right- Martin Brenner was always an overly proud man.

In a second, he saw a portal closing. The Demogorgon was coming back into the Upside Down with its mouth closed and claws out. Brenner knew it he was supposed to hide in this moment, but he froze. This Demogorgon wasn't the one he'd been following. This one had been all black, with a light red mouth. As he was almost spotted by the creature, something pulled him back. The figure put a hand over his mouth and hushed him. Through silence and sweat, the two waited, Brenner unsure of who was holding him. His fears and heart rate rose excellently. The Black Demogorgon turned away, and went wandering off. After a few seconds, the hand was removed from Brenner's mouth. The doctor breathed heavily.

"How the hell did you get here?" the man asked as he pulled Brenner against a rotting tree.

Martin turned around and saw someone he recognized. Hopper was growing an uncombed beard and his clothes had been torn. He had been victim to the Upside Down. Fear continued to coarse through Martin's veins as he looked down at Hopper.

"Son of a bitch," a scared smile came to Brenner's face," After all these years, I thought I'd never see that face again."

"Same to you," Hopper growled as he set him down," Come with me. Tell me how you got here as I go look for that thing."

From there onward, Brenner explained his capture and how the Russians were trying to keep their own Demogorgon. Somehow, as moronic as it was, Hopper believed Brenner. After his encounter with the Russians, he would believe anything having to do with them. The police chief went on to explain why he was there and how he was following the Demogorgon.

"I found it lurking outside of some gas station in this hellhole," he explained as he quietly walked," it was riding all around and looking for something. God knows what. I followed it to different places, snuck through portals and found myself scrounging for food. I've been doing this for days, months, maybe years. I thought that maybe it was going to Hawkins. That's the only place I want to be at."

"What has Hawkins been like since I left?" Brenner asked.

"Oh, it was great," Hopper said with a hint of sarcasm in his voice," Eleven became 'my daughter', we all went through some trials but El? She went through a lot."

Hopper thought a lot about Hawkins. Truth be told, he missed the people that lived there- well, two in particular. The ex cop couldn't help but think about Joyce. How her eyes were sparkling with tears before his fatal mistake. He thought about the last hug from Eleven before he went off. The words he never got to say to her were forgotten. The kiss he never gave Joyce was forgotten. The life he wanted to lead was not forgotten- and it would be there until the day he died in the Upside Down.

Before Brenner could speak, he was silenced and pulled over by the man. They looked from behind a rotting log, where they saw a portal opening up. Hopper kept his eyes on the open portal. If this was Hawkins, he would run like hell and get back to where they belong. He went to jump up, but stopped when he saw another creature coming in. Brenner glanced up and recognized the lighter

Demogorgon coming in. The two turned their backs to the log and kept quiet. Both creatures were together, sniffing each other, then going back through the portal. It closed quickly, and both men stood up.

"There's two," they both mumbled.

"Did you know about this?" Hopper asked harshly.

"You didn't?"

"Listen very carefully," Hopper grabbed Brenner by the arms, "I am not about to die because there are two Demogorgons. I am not about to end up out of Hawkins because of two Demogorgons. I show a pattern here, I believe, and we are going to follow those bastards until we end up right where this whole goddamn mess started. Do you understand?"

Brenner nodded and Hopper let go. They continued to watch from a distance, waiting until their return to see if they would lead the two men home.

"Do you have visuals on the target?"

"Negative," Dustin mentioned into the walkie talkie, "They should've been here ten minutes ago."

"You do realize there isn't a need for a walkie talkie?" Erica asked, making it known that all three were together in the bushes.

"It's cooler this way," Steve argued.

Erica rolled her eyes but gave a smile. Those most was closed on Sunday, Robin invited Mandy to walk around town. They were stopping at the park to take a breather, and the Scoops Troop (minus one) wanted to make sure all went well. Dustin pointed out that the two were coming to sit on the bench. The trio hid and put their binoculars on, watching as the girls were laughing and sitting on a park bench.

"How could anyone think that Taxi Driver is a kid's movie?" Mandy asked, to the annoyance of the hidden Steve.

"Why doesn't anyone let me live that down?" he wondered to himself, then kept watching.

"He's a charmer," Robin sighed, "not for me, but for others. He was the most popular guy in school. An idiot, but all the girls seemed to like him."

"If I liked dudes," Mandy sighed, "I think he'd be my type."

The three in the bushes silently cheered. Mandy was trying to stop herself. She realized letting her secrets out to a stranger. Before she could leave, Robin got up to stop her. The girls locked eyes and Robin confessed that, she too, was a lesbian. Mandy wasn't sure if she believed Robin, but decided to stay. She sat down on the bench, eyes on the floor.

"Are you out of the closet?" Mandy asked quietly.

"Only Steve knows," Robin admitted, "when he confessed that he liked me. Ever since then, he's been trying to hook me up with any girl that comes through."

"Sounds like my dad," Mandy said, "Coming out was...hard, but my parents accept it. A little too accepting at times," she paused, "you know, maybe coming to Hawkins is gonna be a good change. Especially after I heard those rumors."

Robin bit her lip and looked to the ground. She wondered if Mandy could handle the truth. If it would ruin everything. She heard rustling in the bushes. She excused herself and went towards the bushes. When Robin met their faces, Erica pointed to Dustin, who pointed to Steve, who pointed to...himself.

"What are you doing?" she asked.

"We wanted to make sure you were okay," Steve admitted, "So, are you two connecting?"

"Please don't spy on us anymore," she sighed, "Yes, we're okay and I don't need her finding out that the Scoop Troop is spying."

"Just keeping a close eye, Mama Buckley," Dustin smiled.

Robin couldn't be angry when Dustin smiled. She went back to Mandy and continued her conversation, happy to have a new person to laugh with.

10. Chapter 10: The Strange Encounters

This chapter's a bit longer than the others but I hope y'all enjoy!

"How did you feel about the incident involving Starcourt?" Mr Stanford asked Taylor Sweeney, the local grocer who agreed to do an interview for the new story.

"Scared as hell," he admitted as he stocked the shelves, "When I saw the explosion on TV, I remember running and making sure my family and neighbors were okay. My wife was crying her eyes out. She didn't think our kids would be safe after that, but I convinced her to have us stay. I'm not gonna lie, when all that went down, I was relieved."

Nancy quickly wrote down his words. When she finished, she was encouraged by her boss to ask further questions. Her story idea was coming to life, and he wanted her to be more involved than anyone.

"Why is that, Mr. Sweeney?"

"With that mall out of the way, we were getting our old Hawkins back. The small town I knew, and my daddy knew, and his daddy knew too. I wanted to see this town go back to the way it was. I missed this simple life. To be honest, we were all happier that way. We didn't have to worry about our jobs being taken or people like my sister-in-law dying in some big explosion like Starcourt caused. Now that that's over, all we have to do is go back to worrying about looking out for each other. Although, I don't mind having a movie theater in town."

"Do you believe that the rumors about Hawkins are true?" She asked.

"Hell no!" Taylor argued, "We have nothing to hide here in Hawkins. Those rumors are just trying to attract tourists. What good is that gonna do? And this is nothing against you or your family, Roger- new families are actually the best thing for our town. We need to go back to the way things were, before we had to deal with the rumors ruining everything. I just hope things could get back to normal somehow."

Nancy agreed; she wanted Jonathan to be working alongside her. She wanted his pictures in this case and for his presence. She missed him and there was no denying that. Especially when Mr. Sweeney asked where 'that photo boy' had gone to. When she explained that the family had moved, he seemed to understand. And so did Mr. Stanford.

"This idea of interviewing residents is a good start," he brought up as they walked to the car," Mr. Sweeney had a lot to say."

"Not as much as Mrs. Smith," Nancy said, opening her door," all she wanted to was talk about how teens like us should be spending more time on the future of Hawkins. How restoring it to its former glory is a scheme for her tax dollars. Oh, and how two of her seven cats were missing."

"They probably tried to run away."

The two shared a laugh as they entered the car. Mr. Stanford closed his door, and glanced at Nancy. Since Mr. Sweeney asked about the Byers, she'd been distant. He held the keys in his lap and looked over to her.

"Did you know the Byers?" he asked.

"Yeah," she nodded," Jonathan used to work for the post. He was a temporary photographer, and we worked together. He did a lot for me, and for Hawkins. Now that he's away...things are getting harder and harder."

"Ah, long distance relationships," Roger nodded," you know, Jill and I had one," he saw that Nancy was looking over to him," oh yeah! I was out at college, doing writing and she was still in PA. Cornell seemed like a universe away from her. And Jonathan- he might seem that way too. But, if you both care for each other, and you want what's best for one another, then it'll all work out. It takes patience and time, just like a good article."

Mr. Stanford was never the best at giving advice. But when Nancy smiled, he knew he said something right. Before they left, Mr. Sweeney tapped on Mr. Stanford's window. He rolled it down

quickly.

"Everything okay, Taylor?" the journalist asked.

"I also wanted to ask you guys to look out for Sandy and Danny," he requested, "They're my wife's cats. One's a thin gray cat and the other's a fat black one. They've been missing for a day or two, but she's been worried sick about them."

"We will!" as Mr. Sweeney went up the walkway, Mr. Stanford started the car and looked to Nancy, "More missing cats- that could be a good side article."

She agreed with a smile. As they drove out of the place, Nancy thought about Dustin, and his old cat. How the little Demogorgon bit off more of Mews than he could chew. Of course, this wasn't the only logical explanation for their disappearance. As she tried to think of any other reason, Miss Wheeler found herself unable to do so. All she could do was hope it wasn't any creature trying to claw their way back into Hawkins.

At the video store, the three workers agreed to study together. Mandy's major was education, and she blew through her flashcards quickly. Robin was impressed by her quick ability. Steve was too, but he wished he could do better. Despite his studying and hard work, some things couldn't stick to his mind. He watched the girls laugh and discuss things further.

"What made you want to be a teacher?" Robin asked.

"Oh, I don't know," Mandy shrugged, "I liked the idea of getting to show kids a different world and opening their world with books. I think it just happened after I read *Of Mice and Men*. I just fell in love with something more."

"That's actually pretty nice," Robin nodded.

"Oh yeah?" Steve butted in, "I wanted to be a teacher since I had to pick a major. I also like being in charge."

Robin and Mandy gave a wondering glance to Steve. They then looked back to each other and continued studying. Steve kept quiet

as he went through his books. He was glad Robin was getting along well with someone, especially a cute girl, but he felt a little left out. His search for love had lead him to a dead end. It turned out that most of the girls in his class were Hawkins High classmates. Ones that never found Steve 'The Hair' Harrington attractive and knew him as a bad boy. It wasn't like girls came from all over to go to Hawkins University. So, for now, the only girl Steve could truly love was Ally Sheedy. Mandy had gone off to help a customer. Robin shut her book and looked to her friend.

"Sorry that I'm spending a lot of time with Mandy," she apologized, "it's her first day and I wanna-"

"Do you like her?"

"What?"

"Do you like her?" Steve asked.

He gave her a smile, raising his eyebrows. Robin denied it, not believing in first love, but she was dark red. Steve had always believed in love at first sight- even when he hadn't really known love. Love at first sight was ridiculous to some- but to the boy? He saw it with his friends and, one day, he'd see it with himself.

"Then I don't see a reason to be sorry," he laughed, "Although, I wish I didn't have to be such a loner," he proceeded to throw his hand on his forehead and fall back.

"Cheer up, Cindy," the girl slapped his cheek gently, "You're gonna find your Prince Charming one day. Just get ready for the ball, kay?"

Steve rolled his eyes, but gave a smirk. He glanced back at Mandy, who was showing some kid a movie with Robert De Niro. A thought popped in his head as he glanced back to his friend.

"Does she know about the theories being true?"

"She's skeptical," Robin admitted, "she's always had the thought that they'd be real. But she's...nervous? I guess making up creatures and scary things makes someone sound like an idiot."

"I would be skeptical too," he said, "I mean, I was when I first got involved in all of this. Now, I've got kids and a new friend who knows pharmacy better than I ever will."

Robin agreed quietly. She knew telling Mandy that they'd actually been true rumors, the girl would see her as...God only knows. The girl came back and they went on with a normal conversation, but Steve still had his mind somewhere else. In his studying and thinking, all his thoughts went to the flickering lights that were overheard.

Dean needed to get away. After his day at a new school, he felt more displaced and tired of his new life. He biked through the woods with a feeling of aggression on his chest. He would've biked back to Pennsylvania if given the chance. Knowing how stupid that was, he chose to just take some time alone.

He ran through the fallen leaves and twisting trees. Dean breathed heavily as he found a calming escape. He stumbled onward, feeling tired and alone. The tears escaped down his cheeks and under his chin. He felt more than alone- he was metaphorically lost. He hated change and moving away from his old life didn't help much. He wanted his old life back. He wanted everything back to normal.

After a few more minutes of walking, the Stanford boy found himself before an abandoned cabin. It looked overgrown with moss and the door had been off of the hinges. This was a place he could be alone. He could hear Lily nagging about going into strange places as he went up the rotting stairs. He entered calmly, wiping the tears from his eyes. Holes opened from the ceiling and walls. The old wood that stuck out was starting to decay, exposed to the moist Indiana air. An old life was laid here; it was seen in the pots lying around, and the television that stood on a little table. The couches and (now dead) fridge stood in plain sight and away from everything else. How could someone up and abandon a somewhat well maintained house like this? Unless...

"Hello?" he called out, not expecting a reply.

After a few seconds of silence, a noise came to the other side. Dean reeled back from an open door, to a room where the sound came from. Grabbing a nearby book, the boy raised it over his head and

walked slowly towards the room. He could hear a squishy sound coming through and his mind couldn't focus. Until the door pushed open and the book fell.

A slimy sack, about the width of the bed it was above, clung to the wall as tight as it could. Tentacle like vines curved all around and into it. Ooze dripped onto the bed and the wall, an odor so foul that Dean felt his stomach turn. Movement happened very little in the sack, but a hole had dropped out in the bottom-one the size of a baseball.

"Those weren't rumors," he whispered to himself.

The boy noticed scraps of fur and- what he assumed were bones- were scattered under the bed. His heart raced as something rattled towards him- but was relieved to find a tiny, tadpole with legs coming towards him. It looked up to him, making little noises and standing before Dean. He slowly knelt down, and picked up the tiny creature.

"This is one weird lizard," he mumbled, "You know what? I bet I'm dreaming. I bet this is all just some big Halloween decoration and you're just a baby reptile. And I bet you're starving."

The creature seemed to nod in agreement. Smiling, Dean took the little thing close to his chest and ran out. He wouldn't tell Lily, knowing she'd freak out, and simply rode off, happy to have a new companion. And blissfully unaware at the same time.

11. Chapter 11: Back in Life

Enjoy!

"What's Batonsville like?" Mike asked El.

After school, the Hawkins group rode to Cerebro to talk to the Byers family. They missed talking to them after their first day, so the group wanted to make it up to them. Robin and Steve snuck their way over, but Nancy had stayed at The Hawkins Post. She wanted to finish her article, despite wanting to talk to Jonathan. He understood, and was happy that she was back to what she loved. Though he missed her more than ever.

"Batonsville is beautiful," she sighed, "It's like Hawkins but without the monsters. And you."

"So I guess it's not too beautiful," Mike joked and earned a laugh from her, "You know, we all miss the both of you like crazy."

"Same here," Will brought in, "but we'll see you at Christmas, right?"

"Of course, small child friend," Robin brought up, "As long as nothing weird happens. But I wouldn't count on it."

Eleven and Will became silent on the other end. Jonathan knew what they were thinking, but he didn't want to come out and say it. The Hawkins crew glanced to each other when the silence came about. Dustin started to mess with buttons and turn the dials.

"It's not broken, right?" Steve brought up.

"It couldn't be," Dustin nervously said, "I just fixed this. Guys? If you're saying something, we can't hear you!"

"I don't think they're talking," Max mentioned.

"El? Will?" Mike asked, "Are you guys okay?"

"Something weird did happen," Will brought up, "actually, it's been happening."

The Hawkins group looked to one another, concerned for their friends (and girlfriend). They listened in, waiting for an explanation they would never understand.

Mandy tossed her books onto her bed. By now, she was tired of studying. She wanted to have some more fun in her new town, but she had a shift to get ready for. Miss Stanford didn't want to go to her job that night. She knew Robin wouldn't be there, and she'd made the move more bearable. Mandy found a certain comfort in her new friend. She realized that the town of theories (which she was scared to believe) wasn't so bad after all.

"Dean, Lily, I'm going to work," she called out, "Tell mom I'll be home at seven thirty."

She didn't get a response, and it didn't bother her much. They were probably busy with homework or watching television. Nonetheless, Mandy had work to do. She left her room and, as she did, she heard the front door slam shut. Curious, the sister called for her siblings again. This time, she heard a noise from Dean's room. It sounded like scratching and the door was shaking.

"Dean?" she called out, quickly walking to his door, "Dean! What the hell are you doing in there?"

"Mandy, help!"

She'd never heard her brother sound so distressed. In fear, she flung the door opened, and noticed a giant creature on her brother's bed. It looked like a raptor that was the size of a cat. It hissed and growled at the woman. Dean was close to the door, wanting to get out, but wanting to keep it captured. His sister dragged him out and slammed the door. The creature came running towards the two, but crashed into the door soon after. The two were on the floor, huddled close and hearing the angry creature scratch and yell. Mandy looked down at Dean, confusion and fear on her face.

"What the hell was that?" Mandy asked, "And where is Lily?"

"She's going to get help."

"I've been having these dreams about the Demogorgon," Will explained, "El's been connecting to some of them, but the past few nights have been filled with these nightmares. Like the one I had last night. I was back at Hopper's cabin. It was back to normal, before everything happened last year. I was going into Eleven's old bedroom. When I opened the door, the Demogorgon was standing over something. When it saw me, it just stared. And it said something...something about Hopper. Then I woke up and my nose was bleeding and I don't understand."

The group glanced to one another in fear. Hopper, Demogorgons, and Will...they couldn't escape it all. El touched her nose, remembering the effect of using her powers. Perhaps Will, somehow, had his own powers and it connected to the dreams.

"Nancy said cats have gone missing," Mike glanced at Dustin, "Do you remember what happened to Mews?"

"And lights in the town have been going on and off a lot," Steve thought aloud.

"No," Lucas laughed, "I don't want this to be another monster. We've gone through this whole cycle for almost three years. We keep getting sucked in with more and more monsters. We can't keep this up anymore."

"Those rumors are ruining Hawkins," Robin mentioned, "We're not safe if another creature is coming. We need to be prepared."

As they rambled nervously, Lily came running up the hill. Her breathing was heavy and her eyes were full of panic. The group was quick to ask if she was okay. Through tears, she was stuttering and trying to explain something. Robin and Steve stood beside her.

"Hey, hey," Steve whispered, "It's alright. Everything's gonna be okay."

"What happened?" Robin asked.

"It's Dean," she tried to explain, "he brought home some kind of lizard and he went to show me today. I didn't believe him, but he wanted to

prove it to me. So, we went into his room and there was the creature. It was huge and it tried to attack us and..."

"Did you say lizard?" Dustin asked, looking to his friends, "Shit! El, Will, that dream you had predicted something worse. Our new friends discovered another creature like Dart. We have to go and stop this."

When the group left, the Byers felt their hearts sink. They knew what was coming. Will and El weren't sure what to say, Jon looking for his mom. They didn't know what to do. Until the young girl looked at the bandana on the dresser.

Joyce kept her eyes peeled on the road. Her second day of work was normal- as she'd always wanted. She needed a day of just filing papers and calling in students to the office. It made her feel better. It made her feel...happy. Even with all she missed in her old town, she wanted nothing more than to go home, whip up a normal meal and go to bed. To forget the past and live for the present. It's all she ever-

The woman slammed on her brakes when a creature came out of the woods. The man was on the hood, and looked into her eyes. When Joyce saw that it was Brenner, her heart raced and anger flashed on her face. She got out of the car and walked over to him.

"I thought you were dead," she growled, "You died, they told me- What the hell are you doing in Batonsville?"

"Listen," he raised his hands, "I know you're angry at me. I know you don't like me, and I know I've done a lot of bad things. But I need you to listen. I came from the Upside Down. There are two Demogorgons and their on their way to Hawkins. We need to get there and fast..."

"I shouldn't believe you," she yelled, "You could be a ploy. You could be on some kind of drugs and using me to..."

"Mrs. Byers," he said calmly, forgetting her first name, "I need you to believe me. Hopper is in the Upside Down. He's following the Demogorgons to Hawkins."

Joyce wouldn't believe Brenner. She refused to. Hopper died months

ago. He was gone for good and there was nothing she could. She looked in his eyes, and had to compromise. She grabbed him by his shirt and brought him in close.

"If you're lying," she hissed, "I will personally see to your end. I will make sure you never see me, my family, or anyone ever again. I will leave your ass on the side of the road, you got that?"

"Of course," he nodded, "anything to get to Hawkins."

"We have to get to the house," she glared at him as they got in the car, "If you say anything to El, I'll-"

"I won't," Brenner was quiet, "How has El been?"

"She's fine," Joyce said as they drove, "She...she's lost her powers. And when she finds this out..."

All was silent as they drove on. Joyce could only think about Hawkins- and so could Brenner.

12. Chapter 12: Going Home

Enjoy!

"I have to tell her," Rudy was pacing his room nervously, Deborah on his bed, "I can't let myself walk on eggshells the rest of my life."

The Willis boy was insistent that he tell Jane the truth. That he saw her number and reveal his own. Even if it destroyed the friendship they were building, he would have rather told her the truth. Deborah was all for it, but their father turned a blind eye.

"We can't," he said, "I'm sorry, Rudy, but this is a terrible idea. What if things are worse than they seem? What if I lose you- or, which is way worse- the two of you? What if that experiment comes back to bite us in the..."

"Dad," Deb shouted, then lowered her voice, "Don't be afraid. We all wanted to see if those rumors were true. If we go through with this, we could learn everything we've wanted to know about Hawkins."

Kevin was quiet. He knew his kids were right. They'd always had good heads on their shoulders. They were careful, and now it was time to take a risk. The siblings looked to each other, then approached the man with soft steps.

"We can't be caged forever," Rudy said hopefully, "Besides, I think it's time I used my powers for good."

A smile came to Kevin's lips. He ruffled his son's hair, and gave a nod.

The scene on the living room floor was all too familiar. Eleven's bandana was tied to her eyes. Jonathan turned up the television, static filling the room. The background noise was the only thing she could focus on. Even then, she was having trouble finding the Demogorgon. Will sat in front of her, hoping that she got a sign. He tried to remember what the monster had looked like...

"It was tall," he described, "it had a mouth that opened like a flower. It was horrifying and you...you disappeared with it."

But she couldn't get to that state. No matter how hard she thought, it wouldn't work. She was becoming frustrated with herself. El took off the bandana, tears streaming down her face. Jonathan shut off the radio and ran over.

"Hey, hey," he whispered, "Don't cry. It's gonna be okay."

"How am I going to do this?" she quivered, "I don't have my powers and I can't stop the Demogorgon without them. Especially if I can't find it. We are doomed and it's all my fault."

"No, no," Will shook his head, "El, you losing your powers is not your fault. You lost them protecting all of us and we couldn't be more grateful. Mike, especially. You protected us, now it's our turn to protect you."

Through tears, Eleven looked up at the Byers boy. She'd considered him a brother for so long. He was practically family. He knew calming her down was the best thing he could do. She thanked him with a smile. As they hugged, the front door opened and they let go. Joyce walked in with her eyes wide and heart racing. Concern grew on the faces of the children, Jonathan making his way over.

"Mom what's wrong?" he asked.

Martin made his way in, eyes on all before him. Eleven stared back, her heart racing. If she had her powers, she'd use it against him. He was supposed to be dead. Kali was wrong when she said he was alive. He went to walk in, and El stepped back. All of the past came back. The abuse and heartbreak she took from that man...it broke her spirits. Jonathan went to his mother with a worried look on his face.

"What is he doing here?" he asked.

"I'm the last person you want to see," Brenner noted, "I get that. I need you to listen. We have to get to Hawkins and fast."

"Why?" El asked angrily, "I want you away from me! You tried to hurt..hurt me. And you made me suffer. Made me cry. I wish...I wish you were dead!"

Anger and sadness came to El. But Martin was understanding. He

deserved it, he admitted, but he kept his mind focused. And so did Joyce.

"He's here to help," Joyce admitted.

"And you trust him on that?" Jon asked, his mother trying to calm him down.

Joyce wasn't sure what to say. It was obvious her kids were upset, and nothing would make them believe otherwise. Unless...After a few minutes of cluttered talking and nervous chatter, Joyce raised her voice.

"Hopper's alive!"

The room was silent for a second. All eyes landed on the woman. Eleven felt herself choke up when she heard her 'mother'. It was almost too good to be true. When asked if it was real, Mrs. Byers teared up and looked to Brenner. He glanced towards the girl and took a deep breath. He knelt down and locked eyes with the girl.

"Eleven," Brenner said, "I promise, that after we save Hawkins, I will be out of your life for good. The facility is gone. The Russians took everything and locked me away. That's where they had that Demogorgon. Well, one of them."

"There's two," Will looked to El, "In one of the dreams, there was one that was all black. And then there was a different one. Who knows what kind of destruction two Demogorgons can do. El, we have to trust Dr. Brenner...if he knew about two Demogorgons, what else does he know?"

Eleven hated the idea of trusting her old enemy. Especially when he'd taken advantage of her powers for so many years. But her powers were gone. And Hopper...if he was still alive...

"How will I track the Demogorgon?" she asked.

"Will had those dreams," Jonathan spoke up, "he knew the Demogorgon was coming. This is going to sound crazy, but what if..."

"I could track the Demogorgons."

Will looked ready to accept the challenge. Eleven saw this as insane, but maybe it would work. She handed him the bandana and nodded. Before he could tie it around his eyes, a knock came to the door. Joyce quickly grabbed an umbrella, ready to hit whoever was at her door. When she saw the Willis family, she dropped her umbrella and gave a smile.

"Hello everyone!" she smiled, "What brings you guys here?"

"Mrs Byers," Rudy gulped, "I need to talk to Jane."

"Hello, Rudy," Eleven came close, "Is everything...?"

"Jane," he said, "I saw your tattoo. The one on your wrist. I saw it the other day when we were all out and I didn't want to think it was real. I thought it could've been your bracelet but I didn't want to believe that. I wanted to believe that you...you were a part of *that* experiment. Jane. I was a part of it too."

When El and Brenner saw the '010' tattoo on Rudy's wrist, their eyes widened. The others couldn't believe that another kid from the experiment was alive and before them. He felt tears escape his eyes as he looked to Eleven. Her tears were forming too, knowing what kind of torture he'd been through.

"You...have a power?" she asked.

"Uh-huh," he nodded, "I have this ability where I seem to stand in time. But I just move fast- like the Flash. Do you want me to show you?"

"As much as that would be cool," Joyce admitted, "Right now, we have to find a creature that's after our friends."

"The creature's right there," Kevin nodded to Brenner, "and it's slimy and full of shit. He manipulates your wife and takes your son for some cruel experiment."

Brenner knew Kevin would show aggression towards him. He expected anger and a fight to occur, but Deborah held her father back. He tried to apologize as Kevin was held back. He knew Mr. Willis wouldn't take it, and he had to accept it. From there, Will put

the bandana back on, Joyce explaining what was happening. The whitenoise rose and the group stared, waiting for results...

Will stood in a room of black. He was scared, at first, but he could hear Eleven reassuring him. He walked along the floor, feeling lost. He didn't understand what was happening, but he knew what he had to find. Before him was a gathering of dying trees. He knew that's where the Demogorgons would be.

He walked quietly towards the tree, anxiety streaming through his veins. He shook gently as he made his way over. He reeled back when he heard a noise. He hid behind a tree and watched the black Demogorgon making its way around the bend. It sniffed around, stomping quickly along a beaten path. It ran on, and Will noticed someone coming from behind the tree. Hopper saw it moving on, looking forward at the creature. He really was alive...

"The cabin."

Will pulled the bandana off as the blood dripped from his nose. He looked to his mother, fear in her eyes. He looked to Brenner, then to Eleven. She wiped the blood from his face.

"What did you see?" she asked.

"...We have to go back to Hawkins."

13. Chapter 13: Deja Vu

Enjoy!

The group ran into the Stanford house as quickly as they could. Steve had his old bat, ready to fight. Mandy and Dean were standing by the door when the group made their way up. The eldest Stanford looked frantic, and Dean was in disbelief. As much as Lily wanted to tell him so, she stood silently. They stood by the door, wondering what their cue to go in was.

"We have a lot to talk about," Mike told the two," but for now, we gotta kill this thing, okay?"

They nodded and Robin pulled them both away. She helped Mandy slow her breathing, trying desperately to calm her down. She did her best breathing technique, hoping it would work. Steve and Dustin volunteered to go in while Max would open the door. Everything grew quiet, then Dustin yelled for the door. Max flung it open and the little Demogorgon lunged at the two. Steve smacked the creature with the nail bat. It was thrown onto Dean's bed, bleeding from its new wounds.

"You guys have to get downstairs now!" he yelled, charging in after the creature.

Robin lead everyone downstairs and to the living room. She looked to Steve and Dustin, not wanting to lose two of her closest friends. She knew what that...thing grew up to be. It could kill them and- Miss Buckley turned away and ran down the stairs after the group. Steve slammed his baseball bat down on the creature. It growled and lunged after Dustin, clawing his shirt. Anger grew in the Harrington boy's eyes.

"Oh hell no!" he shouted.

Steve screamed and the creature turned to face him. It opened its mouth and leapt forward, only to be thrown again by the bat. He beat the creature down with such a force that made Dustin scared. Once the thing stopped moving, Steve looked up to the kid with too

many emotions to count.

"Are you gonna cry?" Dustin asked, completely serious.

"No," Steve sniffed and looked away, " Just feels good to be holding this bad boy...again."

"Thanks for saving my life, Mama." but this time, Steve smiled and hugged the boy.

Dean explained, in detail, where they found the little Demogorgon. He wouldn't look anyone in the eye, but he knew he was wrong. That everything had been real and all before them was happening so fast...Mandy was silent too. She kept her eyes all around, but she kept looking to Robin for comfort. When Dean was finished, Steve and Dustin came downstairs. The Henderson boy held up the tiny Demogorgon with pride.

"Damage has been done," he admitted, " but this little bastard's gone."

"But there's more coming," Dean said.

"Apparently," Lucas continued, " there's a whole sack full of these things. They're being hatched and feeding off of the missing cats. That's why they've all gone missing."

Mike went off for a minute while the group began to panic. Max and Lily noticed, and followed quickly. He paced in the kitchen, hands running through his hair. He was scared to learn what was back in their town. What was here to kill them again. The girls stood in the doorway of the kitchen, but the redhead approached first.

"What's going on?" she asked.

"Seriously?" Mike glared, " There are Demogorgon babies coming to Hawkins, which means there's gotta be two full grown Demogorgons. Which means that we have to fight them, but how are we gonna do that? Even if Eleven came back, she doesn't have her powers. Without powers, how do we fight back? We don't and we let everything fall to shit!"

"Mike," Lily spoke, " Mike! I don't really know Eleven or what a

Demogorgon is, but I do know that you've faced this before. All of you have, apparently. Powers or not, you've probably stopped this creature and saved Hawkins. If you've done it before, you can do it again. You've got the Stanford siblings on your side. All of you do."

Mike knew, perhaps, it would help in some way. Max thanked the girl and they decided they should work on a plan. Steve insisted on writing in a notebook, but Erica was against it. She insisted that they just start. Robin pulled the group together, a plan already in mind.

"Scoops Troop!" she called out, "We are going back to Cerebro. I'm sure the family in Batonsville will want to know what's going on. If they don't know already."

"Even if El doesn't have her powers?" Dustin glanced at Mike.

"Even so." Mike said with a sure smile.

"Scoops Troop?" Mandy asked with a laugh.

"It's what we call ourselves," Robin thought for a second, "You know, we could use another member to the team. Perhaps another teenager?"

Mandy smiled and accepted the offer. They agreed to contact the Hawkins group when the deed was done. They ran out of the room and to their destination. The others knew they needed some help in their mission. Mike looked to the crew and smiled, having an idea.

Nancy couldn't believe how many cats had disappeared. Their pictures were all over Mr. Stanford's desk, waiting to be put in the news. Their main article would be published the next day, so their focus was now on the animals. Mr. Stanford counted twenty cats in the past few days. He was just as confused as the girl- though, he didn't know what happened. They sat by the typewriter as they worked. When the phone rang, Nancy was the first to pick it up.

"The Hawkins Post," she answered, "How may I direct your call?"

"Nancy," Mike said, "there are two Demogorgons in Hawkins. They've been multiplying and they've been laying eggs in Hopper's old cabin. Dean Stanford found a little one and he took it home."

"You're kidding."

"We're going back to the Stanford house. I want you to go to Cerebro and then we're going to Hopper's old cabin. We're going to stop this thing."

"Just stay-' Mike had hung up," -Safe."

Nancy hated for this to be true. She put the phone down and looked at the pictures. The missing cats all came together in her mind. They all had the same fate as Mews. Miss Wheeler forgot about her boss being close by. He asked if everything was alright, and she knew she couldn't lie.

"Mr. Stanford, I'm gonna sound like some idiot, but...the rumors are true. Monsters and Russians- it's all been in Hawkins. And I get it if you don't believe me, but your kids are involved and they found the monster. There's two of them, actually. Your son found a baby creature and they're headed to stop this."

"Not without me," he declared after a few seconds, "I've always believed in those rumors. Even if it was just a little bit of belief. Right now, I've got a town to save."

Nancy smiled, relieved that her boss understood the circumstances. Quickly, they parted ways, ready to fight what was out there.

14. Chapter 14: ET?

This chapter is shorter than the others but I hope y'all enjoy!

Joyce knew she was speeding along the road. She knew she would have to come up with a lie if she got pulled over, but she didn't care. Saving Hawkins for the fourth time was worth a ticket. They were only an hour out, but the packed car made it seem like forever away. Brenner had been the unlucky one to sit in the way back. Right next to an angry Kevin. Martin kept his eyes outside, but Mr Willis's evil thoughts were getting the best of him. He simply kept to himself, knowing how dire the situation was.

"How can Hopper still be alive?" Joyce brought up, "How can all of this be happening again?"

"And how did Will get powers like us?" Rudy inquired.

"His connection to the Upside Down could have something to do with it," Brenner said, "Not only that, but his time with...Eleven could be a factor. Who knows if it has to do with everything he's been through."

They could agree on that- but there was still a lot to be taken in. Rudy had seen the creature once- or so he thought. He never told his family because he thought they'd never believe him (perhaps now they would). It was tall and had a closed mouth, but the way it traveled was how the Byers family described it. It was before the family ran out of Hawkins. Even though he was young, the memory stayed and he now knew why. He looked to Eleven, who held a walkie-talkie in her shaking hands.

"In Hawkins," he said, "when we see that creature, I'm gonna use my powers against it. I know you don't have yours and that's why, as a new Batonsville Biter, you'll be protected."

"Thank you-"

"*This is Scoops Troop- do you copy?*" Dustin called in.

The group glanced around to one another. Eleven picked up the radio

and answered them quickly. On the hill, the troop (with their new member) cheered. Joyce was relieved that the Hawkins group had contacted them.

"We have some bad news," Erica went on, "There's two Demogorgons in Hawkins."

"They've been breeding at Hopper's old cabin," Robin continued.

"Well we have news too," Will answered, "Hopper's alive and he's coming to Hawkins."

Dustin called bullshit, but the others disagreed. Hopper being alive was the best news they'd heard all day. They went on and explained how Dean found another version of Dart, but how Steve heroically killed it. The Willis family was confused by the words they spoke, but Kevin would remain vocal about it.

"What exactly is a Demogorgon?"

Steve immediately asked who they were. Robin quickly stated that they didn't have time to introduce one another. He then went on to explain to the stranger.

"It's like an alien," he winced as he thought, "it has a mouth like a flower and it's, super tall. It's a really nasty alien, not like that super short alien from...that movie. Where the kid teaches the alien how to ride a bike and it goes up to the sky-"

"It's E.T.," Deb announced, "and the kid didn't teach him how to ride a bike. Though, that could be a good plot for a movie."

"Thank you, stranger," he replied.

"Since these aren't like ET aliens," she went on, "I'm guessing they're like *Alien* aliens- which means we need a plan."

"We've got one of those," Dustin said, "Meet us on Benjamin Road-from there, we'll introduce one another and hopefully get this moving."

They agreed to do so and the calls ended from there. The ride was silent as they drove onward. Deborah was thinking, then leaned in

her seat. Her father asked if she was okay- then she looked back at him.

"How does someone not know ET?"

Hopper looked at the Demogorgon through the trees. The one that was all black had vanished, though he could've guessed where it was. The lighter one was wandering and scratching its hands along the trees. He knew where they were and he wished they weren't close. He felt his chest tightened but he couldn't show fear. He had one job to do and as long as others didn't get hurt, he would be fine.

The creature was quickly on the move. Hopper ran down the beaten path. He was focused on the monster but saw something moving alongside. They must've been headed for the cabin too.

"Not another one of these," he grumbled and quickly ran.

As he got a closer look, running in their direction, he noticed that it was people. Jim prayed it wasn't who he thought it was. As he approached, he saw that it had been Mike and a few others.

"Shit!" he mumbled as he walked over to them, raising his voice slightly, "What the hell are you kids doing here?"

Mike and the others froze. They were still, at first, shocked to see the presumably dead police chief before them. The world seemed to stop for a second. Although Hopper stared at them expectantly, waiting for them to answer, they still couldn't speak. The Stanford kids understood that this must've been an emotional moment, judging by their stares. Slowly, Mike walked over to Hopper, and hugged him. Jim stiffened up and gently patted him on the back.

"Can we do this another time?" he whispered, "We kinda have to..."

"Everything's been changing," Mike explained, "they moved away. And there's two Demogorgons in Hawkins..."

"I know," Hopper nodded and let go of the boy, "That's why I came here. I need to get rid of those Demogorgons and I know that they're breeding. We're gonna have little baby Demogorgons hoppin' all over the damn place if we don't get on it."

'We have a plan, sir," Lily stepped up.

Hopper looked at the new child. At this point, new friends in the group wasn't the worst of it. There had been stranger things to worry about.

15. Chapter 15: Hawkins Avengers

I hope you guys like this chapter- it's a lot longer than the others. TW: Cursing involved.

Joyce and the others was relieved to reach Hawkins. She saw a car coming on the other side of the road. She recognized Steve's face and slammed on the brakes. Steve did the same (after Dustin and Nancy yelled at him). Everyone got out of their cars, Nancy running to Jonathan. She hugged him tightly, happy to have him back. They were both thankful that they were okay. After a quick kiss, the group was reunited. Nancy saw Mandy Stanford and ran over.

"Your dad's on his way to Hopper's cabin," she explained quickly, "He's coming to help us at the cabin. He'll be alright."

As Mandy thanked her, Deborah stepped out of the car. She saw the other group and knew what had to be asked.

"Which one of you hasn't seen ET?"

"I assume you're the stranger who knew the reference," Steve extended his hand, "Steve Harrington."

"Deborah Willis," she shook his hand, "Nice hair. Do you use Farrah Fawcett?"

Steve couldn't believe she'd guessed his secret. With a quick nod, she smiled and stated she used the same thing. Dustin rolled his eyes as the two talked about their love for the product. Erica got between the two and declared that they didn't have time for this. After Dustin gave the rundown of the plan, he turned to the older kids.

"All of you need to fend off the Black Demogorgon," he announced, "It'll at least cause a diversion."

Deborah looked to her father. He saw fear and bravery coming together in her eyes. He walked up to her, taking her close in his arms. He couldn't lose his daughter, but he knew he had to let her go. He looked down in her eyes again, tears in his own. He told her that

they would stay safe and to keep her head up.

"Bye dad," she said.

Deborah ran to the car and hopped in the back. Kevin watched as the other car was gone in the night. He felt a weight on his shoulders, but his son stood close by. He smiled down at Rudy, knowing his daughter could take care of herself. But still, he feared for her safety and the creature that followed. Steve drove onward, asking the others where to go next.

"We should get supplies to stop the Demogorgon," Mandy suggested, "What do we get and where do we get it?"

"I know a place," Jonathan mentioned.

Murray's home security hadn't changed- despite him insisting that it did so. The shocking deaths of good people screwed with his mind, and he knew, if Hawkins was in danger again, he would be right there. They quickly got out and Nancy pounded on the door. She looked up at the camera and stated her name, along with the people next to her.

"You brought Jonathan Byers back?" Murray's voice came over, "Well, shit, this must be serious. I know the Stanfords- you guys just moved here. But who the hell is Deborah Willis?"

"Doesn't matter," she said.

"If you want my help, yes it does."

"I'm from Batonsville," Deb explained, "my family and I are the neighbors of the Byers's."

"So THAT'S where they moved to..."

"Look," Robin went on, "We came here because there's two Demogorgons in Hawkins and they're breeding. We need to stop them and, maybe, you can help us. Not only that- sir, Hopper is alive."

Murray was silent for a second. He didn't want them to be lying, but he had half a mind to believe them. He then opened the door with a

smile on his face. He laughed, expecting the 'son of a bitch' to be alive. Murray then ushered the group in. He hadn't changed in over three months, and the other didn't expect him to. He lead them to his living room and sat them down. They glanced to one another, uncertain of what was going to happen. Murray sat down in his chair, looking at the group.

"Two of those fuckers, huh?" the investigator sighed, "What a change of pace...I wish I could help, but I've been working on a case. Apparently Miss Thompson has a missing car and, if I find it, we'll be going on a date together."

"We just need some supplies," Mandy reassured, "Something that can trap and take down a Demogorgon."

The group pondered for a minute. If they were going to make a plan, it needed to be well thought out. There were a few ideas thrown here and there, but none stuck through. Until the Harrington boy snapped his fingers at the thought of an idea.

"You know that really old movie where the girl throws water on the witch?" Steve asked.

"Wait, what?" Deb asked with a laugh.

"We don't have to drench the Demogorgon in water," Steve went on, "I know that won't work. But what about gasoline?"

"No, I mean you haven't seen The Wizard of Oz?"

"It's on the list I gave him," Robin glanced over, "Although, something tells me that he hasn't started on the list."

Steve argued that he had seen some of them. There was no time for this, but Steve shot right back. Murray rolled his eyes and rubbed his temples. He knew time was wasting, and eventually spoke up.

"You can all finish your movie marathon when Hawkins isn't dying," he stood, "now, Steve, you had an excellent idea. Therefore, we should acknowledge that idea."

"How do we lure it away?" Jonathan questioned.

"When Dustin and I were luring Dart," Steve brought up, "We used a trail of meat. We could use something like that."

Murray jumped at the sound of that. He ran to the back, asking the group to wait there. Robin congratulated her best friend on having a brilliant idea. She looked to Mandy, who still had a bit of fear in her eyes.

"So now do you believe those rumors?" Miss Buckley asked, earning a smile.

"I hate to believe it," Mandy half laughed, "but I guess I have to now. How did you guys deal with it?"

"It wasn't easy, but we just stuck to our guns. I mean, everyone in this group, from Hawkins, has dealt with it longer than me. Last year was my first time dealing with any kind of creature. I'm still not sure what a Demogorgon is and I'm too scared to find out."

"If it comes near you, it's dead," Robin blushed after she spoke, "I just mean because you're a part of Hawkins now. Once a person gets tied into this town, into the theories and shit, you become part of the family."

Steve mumbled something to Deborah, who gave an understanding nod. She knew what he was talking about, which is why she gave such a glare. Murray came in with buckets, gasoline and a pack of matches. The teens looked into the buckets and found chopped up venison. They scrunched up their noses and looked to the investigator.

"It'll do," he said, "unless you want to be the bait."

"Thanks Murray," Jonathan said.

"Wait!" the six looked to the man, "When you guys find Hopper, tell him I want to see him. I think we need a well deserved drink together."

When the six left Murray's, they noticed a trail of blood in the middle of the road. Curious, Steve drove onward. He slowly followed the blood. The others were fearful of his actions. Jon and Nancy saw

where they were headed to. They'd been down this road before, just months prior. When they saw that the trail led into the steel mill, they were all frozen. Steve parked the car and glanced to everyone.

"So we find what we're looking for and destroy it?"

"But we all have to stick together," Nancy looked to her boyfriend, "I don't think we're safe in here," she then looked to Mandy and Deborah, "this is where a lot of our friends died. When Hawkins exposed the world to the rumors."

They nodded understandingly. The four got out of the car, but Jon and Miss Wheeler stayed. Tears were in her eyes and fear was striking her heart. The Byers son took her hand and held it tight. She looked up then back at the building.

"I never forgot what happened either," the boy said, "I don't think we will. But we can get rid of it again."

"Only for it to come back again," Nancy brought up, "We can't keep doing this, Jon. We're eventually going to be too old to keep up with this. Monsters can't keep coming back-"

"And if they do, it'll be okay," he reassured, "we can take our time. We can fix everything, we can make it alright. I wouldn't be back in Hawkins if I didn't want to fight."

Nancy smiled and they shared a kiss. They hopped out of the car, grabbing two large pails of raw meat. Steve held onto his bat, along with a gasoline tank. The rest of the crew dragged the gas cans with them, while Nancy held the matches. They went into the steel mill with fear and pride in their hearts. They saw the blood trail that slithered in. They made their way downstairs slowly. Steve was determined to find this creature and beat the hell out of it. Deborah glanced to the bat and smirked. She looked to Robin as he started to practice swing.

"Is he usually like that?" she mouthed.

"Don't let him fool you," she whispered, then glanced to Mandy, "He's a lot dorkier than he likes to admit."

Mandy let out a laugh, but quickly covered her mouth. She nodded to the corner, where they spotted a Demogorgon. Even though it was all black, the figure stood like an angry shadow. It was eating a cat it had captured, but it wouldn't be enough. Slowly, the six crouched together and tried to agree on what to do. As they tossed around ideas, Steve went off with his bat. Robin looked up and warned him not to.

"We gotta try!" he whispered.

Then, angrily, he ran towards the Demogorgon, bat raised. The creature noticed him coming and gave out a loud roar. It flung him towards the wall. He felt his heart racing as he picked up the bat and tried to attack again. This time, the Demogorgon scratched him and tried to bite. Steve found that his methods of fighting weren't working. Minutes later, he was knocked unconscious. The five got up from their spot and saw that it was about to attack Steve. But when it stopped short, it looked to the group.

"What do we do?" Jonathan asked.

"By the boxes!"

Nancy lead him to the boxes. Robin, Mandy and Deb went on the other side, facing the back of the creature. The Demogorgon growled as it looked around in the room. It prowled angrily, sniffing for their scent. He stopped stalking Steve's body and started to look for the living. Miss Stanford had an idea in her midst. She quickly grabbed a bucket of meat and splashed it in another corner.

"What are you doing?" Robin asked.

"Just wait," she insisted.

The Demogorgon moved like a shadow in the night. It sniffed its way towards the meat, slowly picking at the pile. It began to gobble it up, as Mandy picked up her gasoline can. She looked to Robin to pick up her own.

"We're gonna go over there and drown that thing in gasoline," she suggested, then looked up and mouthed, "Nancy, you'll set it on fire

and then we're out of here. Got it?"

"Good idea," Robin paused, "Hey, if we die though, I wanted to say it'd be a shame- not just because we died. But because getting to know you better would've been..."

"Incredible," they said.

Mandy smiled as they came from their hiding spots. They walked quickly and quietly along the floor. The Demogorgon stopped eating as soon as they approached. It sharply turned its head and growled at them, opening its flower-like mouth. Jonathan knew what to do. He ran out from the fort and took quick pictures. The light made the Demogorgon stumble back and try to shield itself. The girls poured as much gas as they could on the creature before it saw them. Jonathan kept taking pictures as the group ran to the stairs, half full gas cans and an almost full book of matches in their hands. Nancy lit up a match and set the trail ablaze. The Demogorgon thrashed around and screamed. They were on the top floor, when Deborah stopped short.

"Steve's in the basement," she said, then looked to the bottom, where flames and the Black Demogorgon laid, "Screw it."

"I'm not leaving my best friend down there," Robin announced.

"Then it's you and me, sister," Deb looked to the bottom and ran down.

They had to lay low in the smoke. The creature was thrashing around, trying not to die in the flames. They crawled along the floor until they found Steve. He had bruises on his face and a cut on his lower lip. He was barely conscious and the girls were quick. Robin took his bat, while Deb dragged him up the stairs. The burning Demogorgon ran forward, but Miss Buckley smacked it with the baseball bat. It fell deeper into the flames. Miss Willis dragged the teen towards the group. He regained his thoughts, sitting up and feeling dizzy. Deb knelt down and looked in his eyes. Robin knelt too, making sure her best friend was okay.

"His eyes are fine- I think he's gonna be okay."

"Hey Debs," he said, "What happened?"

"I've never been called Debs," She said, then realized she was getting distracted, "Well-"

"Then she and Robin saved your ass," Jonathan laughed.

Steve looked to Robin, who handed him his bat. He felt grateful to have his best friend. He then looked to Deborah, who was arguing that what he stupid for his plan. Robin agreed, reminding him that he was in a dangerous situation. He then hugged them both, thanking them for their help. His voice was vulnerable, and he felt relief for the first time in a while. They tensed up, but soon leaned into the hug.

"It's okay, Farrah," Deb laughed softly, "Come on, before the place burns down."

"Farrah?" he asked as she helped him up, leaning on both girls.

"Well, I thought about calling you Rapunzel, but Farrah suits you."

Steve smiled down at her. They got out of the burning mill, the Demogorgon left behind. Or so they could think.

16. Chapter 16: The Cabin

Enjoy!

When all was said and done, the groups met close by the cabin. Joyce was the first to get out of the car. When she saw Hopper, she wanted to run up to him. To tell him how she'd missed him and tell him all she could. She cared more about him than she could truly realize. But Joyce stepped out of the way and let Eleven cut in. When the girl saw the older man, tears dripped down her face and under her chin. Hopper pulled her into a hug and held her, shaking slightly as they did.

"It's alright, kid," Hopper softly insisted, "I'm alive. Everything's gonna be okay."

"We thought...we thought you were gone," she whispered.

"No, no," he said, wiping her tears away with your thumb," God, you've grown."

"It's only been three months," she laughed, "I missed you...Dad."

Hopper's eyes lit up at the name. He felt a connection coming on, after just a few years of togetherness. Their hug lasted for another five seconds before they let go. When Hopper saw Joyce, he smiled brightly. She smiled too and felt relief shining down on her. Before they could walk towards each other, the six teenagers pulled up. They came running out with the gas cans and matches. Steve had his signature bat and looked ready to fight.

"Let's get this thing done with," he declared.

The teens went inside and doused the sack in gasoline. Hopper was unsure about doing so, but he made sure to gather out his most valuable belongings. Joyce and the kids helped, packing the stuff away on the side. When all had been done, the police chief took one last look around his home. The splintered wood and rotting rooftop would all be memories. The one thing he thought he could pass down would be long gone. He felt pain surging in his chest. Most was lost

to him. Eleven approached and took his hand, squeezing it tightly.

"What will you do when this is all done?" she asked.

"Don't worry," he reassured, glancing at Joyce, who stood outside" I have something big planned."

El smiled as they turned away. They walked out onto the open field. There was a moment before Nancy struck a match, that made the world seem to stop. Hopper had Eleven in front of him. She was holding Mike's hand, and Joyce held onto Hopper's. The kids were crowded together, with Rudy in with them. Kevin stood next to Brenner, letting anger go for just a second. The teens stood close by, with Steve raising his bat and Deb standing close. Robin and Mandy smiled to one another, looking down at their feet. Jonathan looked to his girlfriend, then gave a nod. As she dropped the match, an angry snarl came from the back and the world moved.

The Black Demogorgon came from the side. Its skin dripped from its bones, blood trailing behind it. The burn wounds surrounded the creature. The fresh scars were much more visible, and the teenagers felt sick to their stomachs. While the fire was being lit, the other Demogorgon came through. The group reeled back, raising their weapons and ready to fight. But they didn't have a plan. Except Steve wanted to swing his bat, until Deb pulled him back.

"We're not going through this again," she said.

"Then what are we gonna do?" Lucas asked.

Kevin looked to Brenner. His idea was cruel and unusual, but so was the treatment towards his wife. He grabbed the doctor and pushed him towards the creature. The Demogorgons noticed and screamed at him.

"Now we run."

The others were shock that Kevin had done something so harsh. Yet, they understood why. The group split up and hid in their cars. The flames were going to get out of hand if they didn't stop them. Brenner was paralyzed with fear as he looked up at the creatures. They

weren't hesitant to rip into his flesh. He screamed as they tore through his skin, the blood splattering all over. The group felt nauseous as they saw the scene; but they felt a strange sense of relief. El hid with the kids, feeling disappointed in herself. She wished her powers would work in the wake of hell. The girl tried to focus on the Demogorgons, hoping to fight those monsters. She dropped her hand and Rudy turned to both her and Will.

"Hey," he said, "we can do this. What we need is to work together. We each have a power, and we have to use it together."

"I don't have a power-"

"Jane. We can work together. We can do this."

Eleven soon nodded and the three came from their hiding spot. The others were trying to stop them, but they weren't listening. The Demogorgons were almost done eating the last of Brenner. They saw the kids approaching and made themselves stand tall. El stood in the middle, the boys holding her hands. They closed their eyes, taking a minute to step into their powers. The girl felt the waves of energy take over her. She was nervous and she wouldn't allow horrible feelings in. They were approaching fast and they had no plan. Then El had every memory flowing in her mind- living in the facility, getting her powers, meeting so many people and losing so much. She felt so much come back to her. When the creatures came to the three, her eyes opened, she let go and stuck her hands out.

The Demogorgons were thrown towards the fire. All around her were cheering, thrilled that she gained her powers back. Eleven walked towards them, twisting her fingers and pushing onward. She was tired of this. She was tired of living in fear and everything leaving her life. Eleven was going to take her life back. After she pushed them through once more, they fell into the fire, scrambling to get out. But Eleven wouldn't give up.

"Go to hell."

Eleven crashed the beams down on the Demogorgons. They struggled under the beams, trying to lift them. They were weakened by the different damages. Eleven looked to her friends, and saw the outpour

of emotions in their eyes. All she was wipe her nose with a smile on her face.

By the time the fire died out, the Demogorgons were burnt to a crisp. Eleven stared at the destruction that laid before her. She stared at her hands, feeling thankful that her powers were back. But just to be sure...she stared at an unbroken board. And quickly, she levitated it. The group of kids, including the Stanfords and Rudy, all approached her. She and Mike shared a quick kiss before she looked to the others.

"You got your powers back," Dustin smiled.

"That's a great thing, isn't it?" Mike asked.

"Perhaps," El answered, " but....I'm no longer alone."

"We saw," Lucas turned to Rudy, " You're Rudy, huh? Lucas Sinclair."

The group introduced themselves to one another. Rudy's tattoo was shown, and the group got a taste of his powers. His speed impressed the others, and were glad to have met another member of the facility. Lily turned to her brother and gave a hopeful look. He rolled his eyes, smiling, and turned to the group.

"I guess I shouldn't have doubted anything," Dean said, " I apologize for everything."

"At least we could get an adventure out of this," Max mentioned, " plus, you brought back El and Will. The two of you belong to the club now."

The Stanfords smiled at one another. As they laughed, Joyce and Hopper stood close by. This was the first moment they could get together. They were quiet as they watched interactions happen, then Hopper looked down at the woman. She was a part of his life for so many years, but they'd never been in such a trivial place. Everything went to hell and Joyce was right there beside him. If he was honest, she'd kept him sane all those years. When she noticed he was staring, she smiled.

"What?" she asked, half laughing.

"These past two- almost three- years have been a lot on us," Hopper said," and I know that we've been through some...stuff. But after that whole experience in the Upside Down, I realized that I need to appreciate everything around me. That includes people and people being..."

Hopper's cheeks turned bright red as Joyce pulled him in for a kiss. The kids were disgusted, but they didn't care. They were happy that they finally got to be together, in each other's arms. From far off, the teens sat, watching the event unfold. Jon and Nancy held onto each other. Robin and Mandy sat close together, their hands slowly resting together. Steve and Deb leaned on a nearby tree.

"Finally," Nancy sighed.

"It took forever," Jon agreed.

"Never thought that would happen," Steve sighed.

"What?" Mandy asked.

"Were they trying to get together?" Deb asked.

The four looked to each other. The new girls had seen the surface when it came to their odd relationship.

"You have no idea," they laughed.

17. Chapter 17: 1986

Enjoy!

MAY 23rd, 1986; BATONSVILLE, INDIANA

Hopper tried to close the trunk. He made every possible move to shove the bags in the back, but it wouldn't close. He'd move things, he'd taken out belongings, he'd even double checked their necessities. Yet it wouldn't fit. Frustrated, he backed away for a minute and rubbed his temples. Joyce noticed his frustration and went towards the back.

"Everything okay, chief?" She asked.

"The trunk doesn't want to close," he explained, "It's like there's some kind of force on it. Wait, where's El?"

"She's getting ready to leave," Joyce looked to the trunk, "Are you sure we didn't overpack?"

"I counted the list twice. We should have everything we need. Including wedding invitations- which I wanted to talk about. I think Murray's gonna be my best man. I mean, he has been helping with the cabin since-"

The woman pondered for a second. While she was listening to Hopper, she looked to the porch. Eleven was standing there, hair tied back with a scrunchie and with a smiling face. The woman winked to her daughter, who let go of her force on the trunk, while Joyce slammed it down. Hopper stared at her, unsure of how she'd done it. She smiled up at him and kissed his cheek.

"Murray's the perfect choice," she said as she whistled for the kids.

While Hopper stood there, Kevin came driving down the road. The kids, too, were packed in and ready for their summer in Hawkins. The Byers- soon Hoppers- got in their car and lead the journey to their old home.

HAWKINS- INDIANA

"Are they here yet?" Lucas asked as he walked around the station.

"They said by five," Robin reminded as she fixed up Mandy's hair," What time is it?"

Mandy checked her watch and found that it was past 4:30. The families decided to meet their friends at the bus station before their summer kicked off. The two Wheelers were more than excited to see their significant other. They had a lot to say in a matter of minutes. Steve did too, as he waited on the brick wall with a sunflower (said to be taken from Mr. Potter's front yard, but he didn't really own them). He tapped his foot as he waited for both Deborah, who he'd talked to since their meet up, and Dustin, who was nowhere in sight. Until he came zipping in on his bike, in a shirt

"Where have you been?" Harrington nervously asked," I've been prepping by myself and I'm a little freaked out...Wait, are you wearing my tie? I was looking for that!"

"I have some big news," Dustin interrupted," Do you remember how Mr Clarke wanted to start a science club this summer? And how he sent out a notice to all fifty states?"

"Yeah?"

The group saw something coming in the distance. When they noticed it was only a bus, they groaned and leaned back. Dustin adjusted his tie and looked to the door. The group gathered close when they noticed the boy smiling. They knew what was coming even before they saw a smiling girl hop off of the bus.

"Dustybun!" Suzie exclaimed.

"Susiepoo!"

The others smiled at his happiness. They'd never seen her before, but they were glad to. Before they could introduce themselves, Dean saw two cars coming in. He called for the others, who waited impatiently for their friends. As the cars pulled up, Eleven hopped out and into Mike's arms. They embraced for a while, glad to have a summer to themselves. Jon and Nancy shared a kiss as they stood together. Rudy

and Will were welcomed with open arms as well.

"Did you have any strange dreams?" Lily asked Will, to which he shook his head, "that's okay. We have a lot to catch up on."

"Same here!" Rudy laughed, "You wouldn't believe what happened on the last day of school."

As they talked away, Deborah got out of the car. She could finally stretch her legs and forget about the long drive down. Steve saw her and panicked. Robin and Mandy looked to each other and rolled their eyes. They were thinking the same thing, having had a connection and- since their relationship started on New Years Day- it grew. They knew what they had to do. They hopped up from their spots and looked to their friend.

"Would you just ask her already?" Mandy laughed.

"It's weird though," he admitted, "you know we've only talked over Cerebro. We haven't been face to face since October. And what if she rejects me?"

"Steve 'The Hair' Harrington finally faces fear," Robin said, "I never thought I'd see you get so worked up. Here's how I asked Mandy on our first date. I went up to her, asked her to the movies, and she said yes. Then we got together. Just stop panicking and think about the good."

Steve nodded and walked over to the girl. She was busy stretching her feet when he walked over. The sunflower was clinging in his hand, his fear spiking and decreasing every few seconds. When he approached her, he straightened up and smiled at her.

"Hello Debs!"

"Farrah," she said with a smile "It's good to see you again."

"You too. Actually, I wanted to ask you if you've seen Short Circuit, or Top Gun, and if you didn't, I'd love to go with you. But if you don't want to that's cool."

"I'd love to go."

"Oh! That's great! Which movie do you want to see? I mean I'm good with either or but I..."

"Well, if we like Short Circuit, maybe we'll like Top Gun."

"...Aren't those two different movies?"

It took him a while to understand what Deb was getting at. As they set up for their date, the adults had decided to head to the cabin. They left their kids standing there, ready for the summer adventure to begin.

LINCOLN COUNTY, NEVADA

The facility was small, for now, but it was ever growing. They had much to think about when it came to those monsters. At least General Hubbard thought so. That's why he'd been panicked as he walked through the halls. The cells held many dangerous creatures, their claws large and screams louder than 4th of July fireworks. He sat in his office, debating how to keep everything safe, when Private Deeds entered (with permission).

"Sir," he said, "we've tested the sight fully. There is no way a normal citizen could get into the facility."

"Good, good," the general sighed, "I still worry, Private. You saw what happened in Hawkins, you know what's going on."

"Oh, if the people know what's good for them, they'll stay away. Besides," he walked towards the doorway, "no one in their right mind would storm Area 51."

Thank you guys for reading. I really couldn't have done this without your support. I hope to create two different series of one shots- one after Beyond Hawkins, and one about years later- then maybe a bigger fic about years later. Thank you again!